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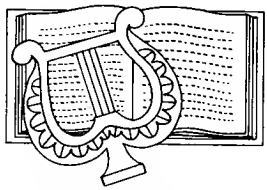

In Memoriam

Ruth Candler Lovett

1935-1964

DESTINY.

" Why, who cries out on pride,
That can therein tax any private party ?

. . . . . .

" Who can come in and say that I mean her,
When such a one as she, such is her neighbour ?

. . . . . .

" Why, then, my taxing, like a wildgoose, flies
Unclaim'd of any."

SHAKSPEARE.

DESTINY;

OR,

THE CHIEF'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"MARRIAGE," AND "THE INHERITANCE."

"What's in a name?"—SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH:

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1831.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND CO., PAUL'S WORK, CANONGATE.

TO

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BARONET,

THESE VOLUMES

ARE RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY AN OBLIGED FRIEND,

THOUGH ANONYMOUS

AUTHOR.

EDINBURGH, March 15, 1831.

DESTINY.

DESTINY.

CHAPTER I.

All the world knows that there is nothing on earth to be compared to a Highland Chief. He has his loch and his islands, his mountains and his castle, his piper and his tartan, his forests and his deer, his thousands of acres of untrodden heath, and his tens of thousands of black-faced sheep, and his bands of bonneted clansmen, with claymores, and Gaelic, and hot blood, and dirks.

All these, and more, had the Chief of Glenroy; for he had a family-tree, upon which all the birds of the air might have roosted. Doctor John-

son, to be sure, has said that there are no such things as family-trees in the Highlands; but the Doctor's calumnies against trees of every description, or rather of no description, throughout Scotland, are too well known to require refutation.

Glenroy, therefore, *had* a tree; and as for his rent-roll, it was like a journey in a fairy tale, "longer, and longer, and longer, than I can tell." However, as the Chief himself was not particular in ascertaining the precise amount of his income, but lived as if the whole Highlands and Islands, with their kelp and black cattle, had been at his disposal; it would ill become his biographer to pry into the state of his affairs, for the gratification of the curious. Suffice it therefore to say, that the Chief of Glenroy lived in a style which was deemed suitable to his rank and fortune, by all—and they were neither few nor far between—who partook of his hospitality. In person, as in fortune, Glenroy had been equally gifted. He was a tall handsome man, with fine regular features, a florid complexion, an open, but haughty countenance, and a lofty, though

somewhat indolent air. The inward man was much what the outward man denoted. He was proud, prejudiced, and profuse; he piqued himself upon the antiquity of his family, the heroic deeds of his ancestors, the extent of his estates, the number of his followers, their physical strength, their devoted attachment. On the other hand, he was of an open temper, of a social disposition, liberal to his tenantry, generous to his dependents, and hospitable to all. His manners, though somewhat coarse, were by no means vulgar; and, when a little under control, he could be both pleasing and gentlemanly in his deportment.

His supremacy being universally acknowledged throughout the extensive district where his possessions lay, he bore his faculties with that sort of indolent pomp which betokens undisturbed power. He felt himself a great man; and though he did not say even to himself that he was the greatest man in the world, he certainly would have been puzzled to say who was greater.

Such was Glenroy; and with all these ad-

vantages, it was naturally expected that he would form an alliance worthy of himself and his clan, all of whom identified themselves with their Chief, and consequently looked upon his marriage as an event in which they had an undoubted interest. As it was impossible, however, that any one so great in himself could make a great marriage, his friends and followers, being reasonable people, merely expected that he would make the best marriage possible.

Greater speculation could scarcely have been excited at the court of King Ahasuerus as to a successor to the rebellious Vashti, than that which prevailed amongst the clan on the subject of forming a suitable alliance for their Chief. Each had his favourite and exalted fair, in one or other of the most illustrious Scottish families, on whom he conceived that Glenroy should place his affections. But vain are the schemes of man! Instead of these glorious results, Glenroy did what many wiser men have done before him; he fell in love, and made what was called, a "most unaccountable marriage;" for he married a merely pretty girl of neither family nor fortune, the orphan

daughter of a poor hundredth cousin of his own. The fact was, Glenroy was too proud to consider it a matter of much importance whom he married: he could derive no consequence from his wife; his wife must owe all her dignity to him. This was a blow to the clan, which all the youth, beauty, and sweetness of the lady could not reconcile them to; and it was not till the birth of an heir, that they recovered their spirits. But then bonfires blazed—bagpipes played—tartans waved—whisky flowed—all, in short, was done to welcome to this vain world an heir to its vanities. Alas! how short-sighted are sometimes even second-sighted mortals!

At the end of two years a daughter was born, but far otherwise was her birth commemorated. A lifeless mother—a widowed father—a funeral procession—tears, regrets, lamentations, and woe—these were the symbols that marked her entrance into life, and cast a gloom upon her infant days. The child was christened Edith, after its mother. And so ended Glenroy's first attempt at connubial happiness.

CHAPTER II.

GLENROY mourned the loss of his wife as much as it was in his nature to do; but he was not the man either to live with a breaking heart, or to die of a broken one. In due time, therefore, it occurred to him, that, great as his loss appeared to be, it was nevertheless one which might be repaired. But, too proud and indolent to take any measures for the accomplishment of his design, he left it entirely to time, chance, or circumstances, to carry it into effect; and these did seem to conspire to bring it to pass. During an occasional visit to London, he more than once happened to find himself in parties where he was so much in the background, that but for the notice of the Lady Elizabeth Waldegrave, he would have passed almost unobserved. Great as Glenroy was, he therefore found he was capable of being still greater: yet greatness by

means of a wife—a woman—and that wife an English woman!—this was a startling thought to the proud Chief. But his stay in town was protracted: he continued to meet the Lady Elizabeth, who was so very affable and agreeable—such an enthusiastic admirer of tartan, and Highland bonnets, and Highland scenery, that Glenroy was captivated; and he even came to the conclusion that he would not be the worse for being connected with some of the highest families in the kingdom. Then although Lady Elizabeth was somewhat *passée*, she was still a showy-looking woman, quite suitable to him in point of years, and more likely to make a good staid stepmother than a younger wife would have been. To be sure, she was not very bright; but Glenroy hated clever women, they were all so managing and manœuvring: in short, from an admirer, the Chief became a suitor, and thought himself a lucky man when he was the accepted lover. Had Glenroy been better acquainted with the character and circumstances of the lady, he would not have been quite so much elated with his good fortune.

Lady Elizabeth Waldegrave was sister to the Marquis of Heywood, and widow of the Honourable Edward Waldegrave, a fashionable spendthrift, who had closed a brief career of folly, leaving his widow and infant daughter to the charity of relations. It may be supposed, then, that Lady Elizabeth's circumstances were any thing but affluent. She was, in fact, struggling to keep her place in society upon a small annuity from her father-in-law, Lord Waldegrave, who, having had to pay largely for the extravagance of his son, was little inclined to be liberal to his widow and child. Glenroy's proposals, therefore, came in good time; and the union being of course warmly approved of by the lady's family and connexions, no obstacle stood in the way; so that, as soon as the lawyers and milliners had done their parts, the marriage was celebrated with the utmost *eclat*. On the one side, there was a special licence, the presence of a prince of the blood, the benediction of an archbishop, with peers and peeresses, lace and pearls, a magnificent saloon, an elegant déjeûner, a line of splendid equipages, &c. Such

was the scene in St James' Square; while, at the Glenroy Arms, the event was celebrated by a numerous meeting of the tenantry and vassals of the Chief, with "barbaric pomp;" a roasted ox, and half a score sheep, barrels of ale and bowls of whisky, long speeches, loud shouting, toasting, cheering, bonfires, bagpipes, and the Highland fling.

Much as Glenroy loved pomp and retinue, he was somewhat startled at the magnitude of his lady's bridal train. In addition to his own travelling carriage and servants, there followed Miss Waldegrave's equipage, containing that young lady, about five years of age, her French governess and English sub-governess, and attended by her own maid, and the Lady Elizabeth's footmen. Glenroy thought less might have served her; but it was too soon, or rather too late, to say so; and Lady Elizabeth expatiated largely upon the goodness of old Lord Waldegrave, in allowing her to take his favourite son's only child to Scotland with her. The Chief tried to feel sufficiently grateful for the favour conferred upon him in this addition to his family; but, in spite of him-

self, he felt something like shame at this importation to Glenroy. The arrival of the new married pair was celebrated with great rejoicings. Lady Elizabeth was dressed in the clan-tartan, wore a Highland bonnet, looked well, made a speech, and was at once pronounced to be a most charming woman.

But scarcely were the rejoicings over, before Glenroy began to suspect that he had not drawn the capital prize in the marriage-lottery; and these his first faint misgivings began to assume a less questionable shape, as the features of the lady's post-nuptial character became to be more fully developed. At length they boldly resolved themselves into tastes, habits, and pursuits of the most decided dissimilarity from her husband's.

How it happened that this discovery had not been made before marriage instead of after, was one of those mysteries which, though of common occurrence, have never yet been fully cleared up to the satisfaction of single-minded people. Whence it is that two persons who seem to have been born only to hate each other, should, under any circumstances, ever fancy that

they actually love each other, is a phenomenon which even philosophers may have encountered, but which they certainly have not yet explained.

No two human beings born and bred in a civilized country, could be more different than the Chief and his lady; and as both were independent, and both had arrived at years of discretion, it seemed but natural that they should remain as fate seemed to place them—perfect antipodes. The lady had been accustomed to a gay London life, and she had also lived abroad. She had seen much of the world, and the world had seen much of her. She had been admired for her talents, her manners, her music, her taste, her dress; and although the admiration had long been on the wane, the craving still continued. She was, in fact, when without her adventitious aids, a mere showy, superficial, weak woman, with a fretful temper, irritable nerves, and a constitution tending to rheumatism, which she imputed entirely to the climate of Scotland.

In direct opposition to all this, Glenroy detested London; despised every part of the globe

save Scotland; hated all music except that of the bagpipe; had little enjoyment in any society but that of his friends and followers; and when he spoke of the world, meant only his own county and clan. He had also become subject to attacks of the gout, which he ascribed to his visits to London, and therefore vowed he never would set foot in it again.

Although Glenroy saw much good company at his hospitable mansion, yet it was only during a short period of the year; for the Highlands may be said to open for the season as the King's Theatre shuts; and, thanks to grouse and deer, the one has become almost as fashionable a place of amusement as the other. During this season, therefore, Lady Elizabeth lived pretty much in her own element; but when that was over, a long and dreary interval ensued: not that the house ever emptied of visitors, be the season or weather what they might, but the company was not suited to her taste, for it must be owned Glenroy was not nice in the choice of his associates. Although his vanity was gratified with occasionally entertaining the best in the land,

still the same principle, together with his love of ease, made him prefer in general being what is called the king of his company.

Amongst sundry of his adherents, whose persons and manners were particularly obnoxious to the Lady Elizabeth, the most offensive was the Laird of Benbowie, a friend and clansman of the Chief's, who, from having been all his life in the habit of paying long and frequent visits at the castle, had gradually become domesticated there, to the infinite annoyance of its mistress. The Laird of Benbowie was an elderly man, of the most ordinary exterior, possessing no very distinguishing traits, except a pair of voluminous eyebrows, very round shoulders, a wig that looked as if it had been made of spun yarn, an unvarying snuff-coloured coat, and a series of the most frightful waistcoats that ever were seen. Benbowie's mental characteristics were much upon a par with his personal peculiarities. He was made up of stupidities. He was sleepy-headed and absent. He chewed tobacco, snored in presence, slobbered when he ate, walked up and down with a pair of creaking shoes, and drummed upon the table

with a snuffy hand. Nay, more; with that same obnoxious snuffy hand he actually dared to pat the head or shoulder of the elegant, refined, Miss Waldegrave, as often as she came within his reach. But all these things were mere leather and prunella to his Chief, whose feelings and perceptions were by no means so refined as his lady's. Benbowie was the very apple of his eye, for he was devoted to *him*. He never contradicted him, or rather he invariably coincided with him. He rode with him, or walked with him, or sailed with him, or sat still with him. He played at backgammon with him, and when there was no one else, did well enough to be beaten at billiards. Yet no one could call Benbowie a hanger-on; for he had a good estate, and a pretty place of his own, both of which he neglected for the sake of living with his friend; and although he was not profuse of his own money, yet, to do him justice, he was equally sparing of his Chief's.

What pleasure or profit Glenroy could find in Benbowie's company, no one could discover. But so it was, and Glenroy could have better spared a better man; although, if pressed for a

reason of his preference, he could only have resolved it into that unanswerable argument, " Je l'aime parceque c'est lui," &c. Lady Elizabeth had at once attempted to expel Benbowie from the house; but she might as well have attempted to move one of his own brown mountains. Benbowie was invulnerable in his stupidity and obtuseness, and nothing less than the united efforts of the fairy and the genie, who lifted up Prince Camaralzaman, and carried him a thousand leagues without waking him, could have made Benbowie dream of leaving a house where habit had completely domesticated him, and where his instinct made him feel comfortable and happy.

Some one has well said, " lorsqu'on ne peut éteindre une lumière, on s'en laissé éclairer;" but Lady Elizabeth did not adopt this wise maxim. She could not extinguish Benbowie's light, faint and dark as it was, neither would she permit it to shine even in its native dim eclipse. The consequence was, that poor Benbowie, who seemed to have been born without a single spark of fire in his composition, became a sort of smouldering brand in the family of his friend.

As neither the Chief nor his lady were young enough to be moulded anew, or wise enough to make the most of what each mutually thought a bad bargain, it may be supposed their lives did not glide away like that of Parnell's Hermit, in one clear unruffled stream, but rather resembled the course of their own mountain torrents, which chafe, foam, murmur, and take their own way.

CHAPTER III.

TIME rolled on, but did nothing to smooth the asperities of Glenroy and his lady. Pride was the ruling passion of both; and unhappily there was no mutual object on which they might concentrate this predominant principle. The Lady Elizabeth added no branches to the family tree; and thus the unjust and overweening partiality of each parent for their own separate offspring continued to grow with *their* growth, and strengthen with their strength.

Such was the state of the Chief's family when he received a visit from his brother-in-law, Sir Angus Malcolm, with his only son, a spoiled handsome boy about the same age as his cousin Norman. Sir Angus was a widower, and had been recently appointed to a high command in India, whither he was to proceed when he should have

found a situation for his son, suited to the anxieties of a fond parent. But that was a matter of difficulty, as indeed it must be to any one to part with his choicest treasure, and commit it to untried love and alien tenderness. Why did he leave it? For wealth—that which tempts so many to "leave each thing beloved most dearly." Sir Angus had a fine estate, but it was loaded with debt. Time, self-denial, and management, might have retrieved it; but to wait on the one, and submit to the other, was not in the nature of an impetuous, open-hearted, open-handed Highlander; and he preferred the easier task of retrieving his fortune by methods more congenial to him in a foreign land. His only care was to secure a safe and happy asylum for his child; and as, besides being allied to Glenroy by marriage, he was also his nearest kinsman by blood, he flattered himself the Chief would take charge of his son, and educate him with his own. His only doubt was with regard to Lady Elizabeth, of whom he had not heard the most favourable reports; but he was a sanguine, good-natured, undiscerning man, and his little mis-

givings were quickly dispelled by the affectionate and gracious reception he met with. Glenroy was more than hospitably kind; and his lady, won by the admiration expressed for her darling, and the beautiful presents bestowed upon her, acted a most amiable and delightful part. Glenroy at once anticipated the subject uppermost in the breast of the parent, by inviting him to leave his boy with him during his absence; and in a few minutes all was settled, to the mutual satisfaction of both parties. Lady Elizabeth was flattered by seeing that it was to her the father looked for care and protection to his son; and her vanity was gratified at becoming the patroness of the young heir to an ancient title and noble fortune. But, above all, her favour was secured by the predilection evinced by the young Reginald towards Florinda. Upon being asked by his father which of his two cousins he would choose for his wife, he declared instantly in favour of Florinda, as being by far the prettiest; he then followed up the avowal of his admiration with an offer to marry her, which was no less promptly agreed to on the lady's part, especially when she

heard of the gold, and diamonds, and pearls that were awaiting her.

The little Florinda was indeed an uncommonly pretty child, with a skin of dazzling whiteness, a profusion of golden ringlets, large blue eyes, a sylph-like figure, and an air of distinction, which, although not always the accompaniment of high birth, is rarely to be seen except among the true patrician orders. She was also of a gay, sportive disposition, and winning manners; thus her natural endowments and early acquirements, rendered her a perfect epitome of feminine grace and beauty. Edith, on the contrary, possessed no uncommon attractions for the superficial observer. Her features were soft and delicate, her countenance mild and thoughtful, and her manners more grave than is usual at her age; for no fond mother's heart had ever pillowed her infant head, no tender mother's hand had wiped away her childish tears, and even a father's arms were seldom open to her, for Norman's place was there. Disregarded or checked in the natural expression of her feelings, she gradually learnt to repress them within her own

rate, brown hair and pale cheeks were much prettier than yellow hair and pink ones; in short, "for any other reason why," his affections were transferred. Lady Elizabeth was weak enough to resent this affront, and to enter into all the childish feuds that followed, aggravated as they often were by nursery maids, to whom a spoiled unruly boy is always a subject of torment, and, of course, of blame.

The consequence was, her fondness for Reginald, which had always been of a very precarious nature, now turned into downright aversion; while he, unused to control at home, and encouraged by Glenroy in all his freaks, set her authority completely at defiance. Even Benbowie, his tobacco, his snore, his shoes, and his waistcoats, almost all ceased to be objects of animosity, compared with this new annoyance. At length matters came to a climax, and threatened to add one more to the many proofs that great events do often spring from trivial causes.

One day, when the two boys and Edith were

engaged in some play, in which Florinda was deemed incompetent to join, to get rid of her importunities Reginald lent her his watch, the parting gift of his father; receiving many assurances in return, that she would take the greatest care of it. These promises, however, were soon forgotten; the watch was opened, examined, wound up, and broken. Summary revenge is always the first impulse of the childish heart; and Reginald, in his rage, shook Florinda with all his might, slapped her on the cheek, and even left the print of his nails on her arm. Her shrieks soon brought Lady Elizabeth to the spot, when she found her darling almost convulsed with terror and indignation at this rude assault. The extreme fairness and delicacy of her skin rendered the slightest touch at all times perceptible, and on the present occasion showed the offence in glowing colours, and told a tale of outrage that raised all the mother in Lady Elizabeth's breast. In vain did Norman and Edith attempt to palliate the offence by detailing the provocation, and declaring that Reginald had not meant to hurt her. They were sure he had only just

given her a slap for breaking his watch. Lady Elizabeth would listen to nothing but the sobs and exclamations of her darling; till at length she worked herself up to assert, and of course to believe, that her child had been seriously hurt, and would have been killed, had not she come to her rescue; the whole was wound up with the soothing assurance to her angel, that the savage should be sent from the house that very day.

"But this house is not yours," retorted Reginald with equal warmth; "it is *my* uncle's house, and I am to stay here till my papa comes home, and then I shall make him send that wicked monkey to prison for breaking my watch. The little wretch! I hate and despise her for telling lies,—yes, you shall go to prison, and be fed on bread and water, you little lying yellow-haired wasp!" And he shook his hand at her with renewed vehemence.

"This is past all endurance," cried Lady Elizabeth, with violence: "begone, all of you!" And in the recklessness of her anger she pushed Edith, who had been upon her knees caress-

ing and soothing Florinda, as she lay in her mamma's lap. Edith fell, and struck her temple against the corner of the chair, but she uttered no cry.

"There!" cried Reginald, as he flew to help her up; "see what you have done to Edith, and how good *she* is! But Betty M'Ivor says you are very bad to Edith, and don't love her, because she is not your child; but *I* love her, and she is to be *my* wife, and she shall be all covered with gold and diamonds that my papa is to bring me. Yes, that you shall, Edith! But *she* shall have nothing but dirty old rags to wear, and good enough, too; for Betty M'Ivor says her skin is just like cream cheese, and her hair like a lint tap."

A fresh burst of screams and tears from the fair Florinda made Lady Elizabeth hastily withdraw with her from the scene of action. In the tumult of exasperated and exaggerated feeling, she hastened to Glenroy; and, denouncing Reginald as the destroyer of her child, demanded that both he and Betty M'Ivor should be sent from the house. A scornful and peremptory

negative was of course returned. The lady persisted, as she commonly did; and rising in her passion at the contemptuous indifference her complaints met with, she at last declared her determination of leaving the house, and taking her child along with her, unless her demand was complied with. This threat being treated with anger and derision, led to a scene of altercation and mutual recrimination. When people are ready primed for quarrelling, a very little matter will serve the purpose, just as a single spark applied to a train of gunpowder will do the business of an earthquake. So it was with Glenroy and his lady. It had been touch-and-go with them for many a day; and now, from less to more, from bad to worse, it ended in a threatened separation. The lady declared she *would* go, and the Chief would not ask her to stay. Glenroy would have been the last man to have turned his wife and her child from his house, however obnoxious they might have been, and he felt rather annoyed at the thoughts of such a thing being said; but he was too proud to betray his feelings, or to make any conces-

sion: he merely contented himself with remarking to Benbowie, that if her ladyship chose to go, she might go; she was welcome to go or stay for him.

"Very right, Glenroy; on my conscience, that's very right," responded Benbowie; "but if she goes, I wish you may not have to aliment her."

The acrimonious feelings of the parents could not fail to keep alive the resentment of the children. A spirit of absolute hatred towards each other seemed to burn in the young hearts of Reginald and Florinda; and they never met, without mutual provocation being given and taken in full measure. In vain the gentle Edith strove to reconcile them; no sooner was an old offence patched up, than a new one broke out; and the only thing they both agreed in was in liking her.

It was at this crisis, that an afflicting dispensation in the Waldegrave family accelerated the separation between the Chief and his lady. At the time of their marriage, Lord Waldegrave had two sons, then in the prime of life; but nearly about the time that the eldest was kill-

ed by a fall from his horse, the youngest died of the yellow fever in the West Indies. Thus the young Florinda became at once presumptive heir to her grandfather, who, broken-hearted and paralytic, was not likely to stand long in the way of the succession; and as the title and estates descended in the female line, she might now be considered as future baroness of Waldegrave. With such prospects before her, Lady Elizabeth felt as if there were degradation in her remaining longer under the roof of a coarse-mannered, overbearing Highlander; and she therefore signified her intention of immediately removing her daughter to England, in order to be near her aged grandfather. She yielded so far, indeed, as to say, that, provided Glenroy would send the boys to school, and engage to spend eight or nine months of the year in or near London, she would have no objections to pass the other three or four in the Highlands. But an indignant refusal being returned, arrangements were immediately made for a final separation. The approaching departure of the mother and daughter caused universal satisfaction through-

out the house, which had long been divided into two parties, as fierce as the Montagues and Capulets. Glenroy's adherents did not of course like his lady, and his servants had long looked with fiery indignation on the importance attached to Miss Waldegrave, and the airs of superiority assumed by that young lady's *suite*; while the governesses and ladies' maids hailed with transport their emancipation from a long dull winter at Glenroy, as the contrasted gaieties of London rose to their mind's-eye. Glenroy's own sensations were of a mixed nature; he felt that his lady's absence would be an inexpressible relief; but there was something of wounded pride which alloyed the pleasure of the parting. Edith shed many tears at the thoughts of losing Florinda, to whom she was really attached; for her warm and affectionate heart was ready to love every thing that did not repel her by harshness or indifference; and Florinda loved Edith as much as a spoiled child can ever love any thing beyond self.

"Do not cry, Edith," said the little future baroness, with a patronizing air; "for when I

have a house of my own in London, I shall make a point of having you to stay with me; indeed I shall; but I will not invite *you*, nor *you*," to the boys.

"If you did, we should not go," retorted Reginald; "we are too glad to get rid of ugly lint-tops, to follow them to dirty, smoky London."

"How happy I am to leave this ugly dull place," exclaimed the indignant Florinda; "and Jenkins says, it is quite inconceivable how we have been able to exist here so long; only, dear Edith, I am very sorry to leave you; but I hope I shall never see Glenroy Castle again!"

"And we hope we shall never see you here again," retorted Reginald, as Florinda skipped past him to the carriage, from which, with an air of insolent triumph, she smiled and waved her little white hands.

Edith was the only one of the family who grieved at the separation which had taken place. Her warm, tender heart had fondly attached itself to Florinda; and her only consolation at parting had been Florinda's promise of writing

her a letter, whenever she got to London. Poor Edith had watched from day to day for this letter—her *first* letter; and all may remember the anticipations of their first letter—anticipations fully realized by the actual receipt of it. What a new world broke upon us with the breaking of the first seal! What glorious visions unfolded themselves as we for the first time unfolded a letter to ourselves, containing perhaps some few words of *full text!* Who ever received a first letter, that did not spell and con it fifty times over—who did not lay it under their pillow at night, and fall asleep, longing for morning that was to give the treasure again to their eyes? But these were joys only pictured to Edith's imagination, as, each day, she rose in fresh hopes that that was the day her letter would arrive. Thus "dupe of to-morrow," days passed away, till at length poor Edith's expectations died the natural death of "hope deferred."

CHAPTER V.

THE lady's departure was the signal for a gathering of the clan, who, as upon all occasions either of condolence or congratulation, failed not to rally round their Chief in full force. Even Benbowie, although in general obtuse as a hedgehog, seemed to feel this as an epoch to be commemorated; and he therefore ordered a new waistcoat ten times more hideous than any of its predecessors. His characteristics also began to expand more freely, and as if they owned some genial influence. He slept more, and snored louder, than ever; he inhaled his soup with an inspiration that might have sucked in a fleet; his wig grew more small and wiry; and when his feet were not creaking up and down the room, they were to be found reposing on the bars of his neighbour's chair. Halcyon days

ensued; Glenroy was himself again; and a never-ending, still beginning, course of revelry was kept up, till the castle more resembled a petty court than a private dwelling.

A tutor had been provided for the boys by Sir Angus before leaving Britain, and to his care they had been committed. He was an Englishman, a first-rate scholar, a man of elegant, refined manners, fond of study, yet skilled in lighter accomplishments, somewhat epicurean in his taste and habits, and altogether such a one as was calculated to form the perfect gentleman, and nothing more.

At first Glenroy grumbled a good deal to Benbowie, at what he called the insufferable airs of the fine English dominie; but as they did not interfere much with his own ways, he was too indolent to resent them; and at last he became gradually accustomed to bear with Mr Ellis, as the most consummate puppy he had ever known.

A governess was talked of for Edith; but that was such a secondary consideration, that Glenroy could not be troubled to make any

exertion to procure one. So, in the meantime, she received lessons from Mr Ellis, in the solid branches of education, along with the boys; while the more feminine accomplishments were supposed to be communicated through the medium of a sort of half-and-half gentlewoman, the widow of one of Glenroy's factors, and herself the fag-end of his clan, being a cousin not many degrees removed from the Chief himself. Mrs Macauley was now an elderly woman in years, but in nothing else. She was plain, but pleasing in her looks: she had a little thick active figure; a broad, clear, brown face; and two of the happiest, merriest, little black eyes that ever lighted up a head. She had an agreeable voice; but her accent and pronunciation were provincial, and some of her phrases were altogether peculiar to herself, which rather gave a zest to her conversation.

But Mrs Macauley's great charms with old and young were her unconquerable good-humour and her unceasing good spirits. She was one of those happily-constituted beings, who look as if they could "extract sunbeams from cucumbers,"

and who seem to have been born *sans* nerves, *sans* spleen, *sans* bile, *sans* every thing of an irritable or acrimonious nature. But with all these wants, there was no want of a heart—a good, stout, sound, warm heart—which would cheerfully have given itself and its last drop for the honour and glory of the race of Glenroy. She had also just as much religion as an irreligious man could tolerate; for her religion was a compound of the simplest articles of belief, and certain superstitious notions of second-sight, visions, dreams, and so forth, which sometimes afforded amusement, or, at any rate, always served for ridicule. As for her accomplishments, they were many and various; and being mostly self-acquired, they possessed a sort of originality, which, in some degree, compensated for other deficiencies. She was a perfect adept in the now much-despised art of needle-work; and, besides the more vulgar arts of hemming, running, stitching, splaying, basting, &c. she had a hand for

" Tent-work, raised-work, laid-work, frost-work, net-work,
Most curious pearls, and rare Italian cut-work,

Fine fern-stitch, finny-stitch, new-stitch, and chain-stitch,
Brave bred-stitch, fisher-stitch, Irish-stitch, and queen-stitch,
The Spanish-stitch, rosemary-stitch, herring-bone, and maw-stitch,
The smarting whip-stitch, back-stitch, and cross-stitch." *

Not satisfied with these her supreme excellences, Mrs Macauley also aspired to the knowledge of music and painting. She had a good ear, a tolerable voice, and a great collection of old Scottish songs, which she sung to herself in very blitheness of heart.

Her performances in drawing were no less limited; as all the efforts of her genius had been concentrated in one single view of Glenroy Castle, which, after much toil and trouble, she had accomplished to her own satisfaction, and to which she had faithfully adhered for upwards of forty years. From this parent view had descended an innumerable progeny of various shapes and sizes, but not of aspect; as all, to a leaf, were impressed with the self-same features. These, mounted in the several forms of letter-cases, pocket-books,

* " The Needle."

watch-papers, &c. were most liberally dispensed by her to the friends of the family, including every one who had ever set foot in the castle.

Mrs Macauley's vanity was so inoffensive, and she contributed so largely to the amusement of every one, that her company was in great request, and by none more than by the Chief himself. In proof of this, besides many other acts of liberality towards her, he had not only fitted up for her a cottage in the vicinity of the castle, but had likewise assigned her an apartment there; from which, however, in Lady Elizabeth's time, she had been wholly banished, but in which she was now become a fixture. This chamber was the favourite rendezvous of the children, who delighted in beating upon her old spinnet, and in being allowed to daub paper, dirty their fingers, and look at cloth-dogs, calico-peacocks, tinsel-grottos, filigree figures, birds, made of *real* dyed feathers, and all the rest of Mrs Macauley's monstrosities; while she, her good-humoured face beaming with pleasure, was no less happy in the belief that she was rendering the most essential benefit to her benefac-

tor, in thus imparting her accomplishments to his children.

Glenroy, to be sure, scouted the idea of her teaching them any thing but her own brogue, and took great delight in ridiculing her accomplishments even to herself; but then, as he said to Benbowie, Mary Macauley, although a great idiot, was a kind-hearted, well-meaning body, and was fond and careful of the children; and if they learned little good from her, they would learn as little evil, for she was a simple, honest creature as ever breathed: to which the usual affirmative, or rather *con*firmative, was returned.

"That's very true, Glenroy; on my conscience there's a great deal of good sense in that. Molly Macauley is a *very* decent girl, and costs nothing."

Such was the preceptress of the Chief's daughter, and in the genial warmth of her social love and sympathy, Edith's young heart expanded as a flower to the sun.

It is a trite remark, that the most important part of our education is given by ourselves. If Edith was not so regularly and well-instructed

as she might have been, she escaped the still more dangerous error of having her mind overworked and overloaded with premature knowledge: and how many a mind has been worked perhaps to the weakening of those very powers which it was the aim of the teacher to strengthen and expand! In the moral, as in the physical constitution, Nature is the best guide; and Nature spoke wisely even by the lips of Mrs Macauley, when she said, "childer will be childer let us do as we will; we cannot put grey heads upon green shoulders!"

CHAPTER VI.

Scarcely had Glenroy begun to enjoy his emancipation from one species of domestic tyranny, when he found himself groaning under another of a very different description—that of the minister of the parish; and if the Chief and his lady could have agreed even in their antipathies, Mr M'Dow might have had the merit of reconciling them. But Glenroy had not even the luxury of openly complaining of this torment; for, like his former one, it was one of his own providing, placed there not merely with his consent, but by his own free will. Mr M'Dow was the man of his own choice; the chosen of many candidates. The church having become vacant by the death of the former minister, much canvassing and competition had of course ensued; and at least twenty "licensed graduates"

had presented themselves, each with testimonials and credentials enough to have entitled them to a bishopric.

But of the two whose recommendations carried most weight, the one was the present pastor, the Reverend Duncan M'Dow, and the other was of the evangelical side; a party whom Glenroy, although professing Christianity, held in the utmost abhorrence. Not that he knew very well what it was they *did* profess; he only guessed it was something he did *not* practise. He had a vague, confused apprehension, that an evangelical pastor was a sort of compound of a Popish priest, a stiff-necked Presbyterian, a sour-faced Covenanter, a lank-haired Seceder, a meddling Jesuit, a foul-tongued John Knox, a what not, that had evil in its composition.

No reasonable person surely can doubt that there have been, and still are, many bright ornaments of the church, amongst both parties of Christians; and it is much to be lamented, when prejudice runs high on either side, and a man is applauded or defamed, not according to his practice, but his profession. As little may it be

questioned, that in their respective congregations the wheat and the tares grow promiscuously even to this day. But this was not the view Glenroy took of the subject; and he was loud against all high-fliers, new-lights, gospellers, bigots, zealots, enthusiasts, saints, and so forth.

Being a moderate man, he, like all moderate people, was most violently opposed to the admission of any person of that description within the precincts of the parish. As the other heritors were few in number, the patronage in this instance was conceded to him; and his choice fell upon the present minister, who had been twenty years tutor in the family of the Laird of Kindullie, and who never had been branded with any of these appellations, but bore the character of being an easy, good-humoured, sensible, moderate man, who troubled nobody, but minded his own affairs. This last qualification he certainly possessed, as Glenroy soon found to his cost.

The Reverend Duncan M'Dow was a large, loud-spoken, splay-footed man, whose chief characteristics were his bad preaching, his love of

eating, his rapacity for augmentations, (or, as he termed it, *owg*mentations,) and a want of tact in all the *bienséances* of life, which would have driven Lord Chesterfield frantic. His hands and feet were in every body's way: the former, indeed, like huge grappling irons, seized upon every thing they could possibly lay hold of; while the latter were commonly to be seen sprawling at an immeasurable distance from his body, and projecting into the very middle of the room, like two prodigious moles, or bastions. He dealt much in stale jokes and bad puns; he had an immense horse-laugh, which nothing ever restrained, and an enormous appetite, which nothing seemed to damp, and which he took care always to supply with the best things at table. He used a great quantity of snuff, and was for ever handing about his mull, an ugly cow's horn, with a foul dingy cairngorm set in silver on the top. To sum up his personal enormities, when he spoke he had a practice of always advancing his face as close as possible to the person he was addressing. Although a strong-bodied, sturdy man, he was extremely careful of his health; and even in a

fine summer's day was to be seen in a huge woolly great-coat that reached to his heels, trotting along on a stout dun pony, just high enough to keep its master's feet off the ground.

Such were the outward man and beast: the inward man was very much of the same stamp. Mr M'Dow's principal object in this world was self, and his constant and habitual thoughts had naturally operated on his outward manners to such a degree as to blunt all the nicer perceptions of human nature, and render him in very truth, his own microcosm. He was no dissembler; for a selfish dissembler is aware, that in order to please, one must appear to think of others, and forget self. This fictitious politeness he had neither the tact to acquire, nor the cunning to feign; consequently he was devoid of all the means of pleasing. Not that we mean to recommend dissimulation, or to insinuate that Mr M'Dow would in reality have been a better man had he been able and willing to form himself on the model of the Chesterfield school. He would merely have been less offensive in the ordinary intercourse of life, and would have sinned less

against the common observances of society. But had he been earnest in his calling, had he sought to have his mind enlightened by the knowledge of those divine truths which he professed to teach, their unction would have softened and refined even the ruggedness of his nature, and have rendered him an object of respect, instead of a subject of ridicule.

From the moment he was "ordained" minister of the gospel, Mr M'Dow had done nothing but make demands for augmentation of stipend, enlargement of glebe, additions to the manse, new offices, and so on. Now there was no way in which his money could go that was so unsatisfactory to Glenroy, as when it was claimed as a matter of right, more especially by the clergy, whom he looked upon as the worst species of land-tax. Besides, like all idle, indolent people, he had an utter abhorrence of every thing that occasioned trouble, or was a *bore*, and Mr Duncan M'Dow was a bore that beset him on all sides. He was a stumbling-block in his path, a thorn in his side, a weed that had taken root in the very heart of his estate, and which it was impossible

for him to extirpate. True, he was not molested with spiritual admonitions, plans for building churches, subscriptions for establishing schools, or schemes for employing the industrious, or relieving the indigent, or reclaiming the wicked: but then he was haunted with estimates for enlarging the manse, and repairing the barn, or hints for rebuilding both house and offices; or he was beset with a copy of the new locality, or an extract of the last decreet, or a notice of a second summons for augmentation, or an interlocutor of the Teind Court, in favour of some other minister; one or other, if not all of which missiles, Mr M'Dow bore as constantly about his person as a highwayman does his pistols. But what provoked Glenroy even more than all this, was the utter impossibility of overawing the minister, or keeping him at a proper distance; for Mr M'Dow possessed that sort of callous good-nature, which rendered him quite invulnerable to all rebuffs: as well might a needle have been applied to the skin of a rhinoceros, as a gibe or a taunt to the feelings of the minister; they were all received as good jokes, which only

called forth roars of laughter in return. Besides, the impression was so completely implanted in his brain, of Glenroy's extreme predilection for him, from having appointed him his pastor in spite of all opposition, that any thing he now said or did, could not possibly remove it. In a word, Henry the Second and Thomas a Becket were a joke to Glenroy and Mr Duncan M'Dow.

CHAPTER VII.

GLENROY'S property was too princely in extent to admit of any very near neighbours who could vie with him in state and consequence. Yet two of his nearest kinsmen had dwellings within a short distance of him; or rather the distance was reckoned short in a country where stormy friths and pathless mountains oppose no such obstacles to social intercourse as are enjoined by the flimsy forms of fashion and etiquette.

All that Glenroy's eye looked upon of hill and glen, lake and forest, were his own; with the exception of one single feature in the landscape, and that the fairest in all the goodly scene. This was a beautiful richly-wooded promontory, which stretched far into the bosom of the estuary that almost surrounded it, and gave it the appearance of a sylvan isle. It had once formed part of the

Glenroy estate, and had even been the original seat of the family, as was indicated by some grey, ivy-grown walls which crowned the summit of one of its green knolls. But by one of the many mutations land is subject to, it had been severed from the greater part of the property, and had passed to a younger branch of the family, by whom it had for generations been possessed. This younger branch had now dwindled away to one "sear and yellow leaf," a rich and childless old man, who had lately succeeded by the death of a nephew, whose first act, upon coming of age, had been to repair and furnish such part of the old castle as could be rendered habitable for the shooting season. His successor was not personally known in the country, as he had left it at an early age to push his fortune in a remote provincial town in England, and had only visited it once since. Glenroy had long looked with a wistful eye towards this property, which, indeed, was the very crown jewel of the family, and for which he would gladly have exchanged many thousand acres of muir and mountain: but hitherto he had coveted in vain.

All his overtures had been rejected: for, to tell the truth, Glenroy had every thing but money to offer for it; and money, unfortunately, is the only thing that ever induces people to part with their lands. But now he seemed in a fair way to gain possession of it, not by conquest, as the law terms purchase, but by gift, or inheritance, as he *said* he was the nearest heir to the childless old man who was now the proprietor. Even if it had been otherwise, it was of little consequence, as the property was not entailed, and it was but natural to suppose he would leave it to him as the rightful owner and the head of the family; especially as he could have nobody else to leave it to, having quarrelled with all of the clan with whom he had ever come into contact.

At a more respectful distance from the proud turrets of Glenroy stood the humble dwelling of his cousin, Captain Malcolm, a half-pay officer in delicate health, the possessor of a paternal farm, and the father of eight children. In early life he had made a love marriage with a lady of good family and great beauty, but no fortune. This step had of course displeased the friends

(so called) on both sides, and the young pair had been left to struggle through life as they best could—and a hard struggle it had been. But, as has been truly said, "unfitness of *minds*, more than of *circumstances*, is what in general mars the marriage union; where these are suited, means of contentment and happiness are within reach." And, in this instance, so it had proved. Mrs Malcolm, though highly born and delicately bred, had followed her husband through all the changes of a soldier's life, had shared his hardships and privations with cheerfulness, and had now retired with him to a bleak Highland farm, with that contentment which was ready to find good in every thing. If their claims had been strictly investigated, it would probably have been found that Captain Malcolm was still more nearly related to the Inch Orran branch of the family than the Chief himself; but his chance of the succession was such a hopeless one, that he never had allowed himself to indulge the slightest expectation. In his first outset in life, he had disobliged Mungo Malcolm, the present proprietor, by refusing to be received into his office,

and bred to his profession—that of a scrivener. One offence was quite sufficient to make an enemy for life of Mungo Malcolm; but when this act of disobedience was followed up by a rash and imprudent marriage, assurance was made doubly sure: the door was completely closed and barred against him, and it seemed as if little less than a miracle could ever open it again.

When this family first came to the neighbourhood, Glenroy had shewn them considerable kindness and attention, in an ostentatious patronizing way; and they had received his favours as people willing to be obliged, because they felt that in similar circumstances they would have been happy in obliging others. But at the same time, the Chief's pompous civilities were met with a simple courtesy, which, while it showed they were not insensible to them, yet denoted minds of too elevated a cast to be overwhelmed by condescension, or oppressed by trivial favours. This, however, was what Glenroy could not understand, and did not like. He was more lavish than generous; he gave freely, but he loved to

brandish his favours, and always looked for an immediate return in gratitude or adulation.

The calm manner and moderate expressions of Captain Malcolm, were therefore ill calculated to feed the cravings of his vanity. Boast as he might, his boastings never called forth any bursts of admiration or applause from his poor kinsman; nor did all the display of his wealth and state appear to excite the slightest envy, or even astonishment, in his breast. Yet there was nothing sour or cynical in this plainness; nothing that betrayed a contempt for what he could not attain. On the contrary, his manners were mild and pleasing to all who could value simplicity and sincerity; and he was ever ready to commend and admire when he could do so consistently with truth.

There is, perhaps, nothing more baffling to pride, than when it meets with contentment in a humble station; it is then like the wind wasting its strength where there is nothing to oppose it, or the waves spending their foam upon the smooth printless sand. In like manner, the lofty bearing and arrogant pretensions of the

Chieftain met neither with encouragement nor opposition in the quiet but independent satisfaction of his poor cousins.

Pride is easily instilled even into generous natures; and the Glenroy children were not slow in learning how greatly they were thought superior to the young Donald Begs, as the Chief contemptuously nicknamed his kinsman's family. This knowledge, however, availed them little in practice; for the young Malcolms, though gay, good-humoured, and obliging, were free from that servile spirit which denotes the mercenary dependent, and in their childish intercourse preserved an ease and equality as remote from false shame as from vulgar forwardness. Educated by pious and enlightened parents, their young minds were imbued with that most elevating of all principles, the genuine spirit of Christianity; and by it they were early taught to distinguish between those things which the world despises, and those things which are in themselves despicable. Though poor, they therefore attached no degrading ideas to poverty, nor affixed undue importance to wealth. Their

minds were kept free from sordid passions and vulgar prejudices, while all the nobler qualities of their nature were strengthened and improved by the constant exercise of the mind's best attributes. Love, charity, contentment, fortitude, temperance, and self-denial—these were the treasures the parents sought to lay up in the hearts of their children; and if they did not always succeed in raising these plants of heavenly growth in that strange and wayward soil, the human heart, the very attempt produced a wholesome influence in displacing pride, prejudice, and selfishness, those bitter roots of envy, hatred, and malice.

There was something so sweet and attractive in Mrs Malcolm, and so pleasing in the whole family, that Edith was never so happy as when allowed to spend some days at Lochdhu; but she would have been ashamed to acknowledge how much she loved them all, for she was accustomed to hear them spoken of in a slighting and somewhat contemptuous manner. Thus is many a pure and generous feeling stifled in the young heart by the withering breath of ridicule.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was at this time that the new Laird of Inch Orran was expected to take possession of his inheritance, and nothing else was talked of throughout the district, while many and various were the rumours afloat concerning him. The only point they all agreed in was, that he was a very particular man—which is the next thing to being called a Hydra. But particular men, and particular women, too, well deserve a chapter to themselves, which they shall perhaps have at another time; but this one must be devoted to the particularities of Inch Orran. Of that "particular man," then, it was generally reported, that he was of a very capricious bad temper; or, according to the nursery phrase, that he was very apt to have the black dog on his back. When that happened, it was said he was in the practice

of sitting in profound silence all the time the fit lasted, with a red night-cap on his head; which red night-cap he would not have lifted for the king himself, till the black dog had taken his departure, and then it was hung up on its own particular peg, till the return of the said black dog. Another edition was, that he always allowed his beard to grow with the growth, and strengthen with the strength of the fit; till at length, in a melting mood, he had again recourse to the razor, and came forth with a new-mown chin ready to salute all the world. Others said that Inch Orran hung out no dead-lights on the approach of a storm, nor hoisted any signals by which the enemy could be warned of their danger. His black dog, it was said, was seldom off his back, and went and came just as it happened, without saying, by your leave. That he *had* a black dog, nobody doubted; and that he was most thoroughly disagreeable, was never disputed. Whether he had a wife, was not so certain: some said they had seen her; others had never even heard of her; a third reported her dead; and a fourth, in confinement. There was also

much speculation as to how he would come, when he would arrive, where he would reside, whether he would entertain the county, &c.? Glenroy had written a pressing invitation to his kinsman to take up his abode for the present with him; but a very brief dry refusal had been returned, which had fired the Chieftain's blood, till he recollected that he was a particular man: and even a great man must give way to a particular man, inasmuch as the one is sometimes a poor man, and the other is always a rich man. Glenroy's next step was to have scouts stationed to give him the very earliest intelligence of Inch Orran's arrival; and no sooner was that announced, than he ordered his barge to be manned, and, accompanied by Benbowie, he embarked on the smooth surface of a summer's sea to welcome the old Laird to the seat of his forefathers. It is sometimes difficult to believe that all things are in their right places in this round world. Certainly Glenroy and Benbowie did not seem in character with the scenery, as they were borne along on the bosom of the blue waters, which reflected, as in a mirror, the varied

beauties that skirted their shores; the grey rocks, the graceful pendant birch, the grassy knolls, the gushing streamlet, the fern-clad glens, the lofty mountains glowing with heather, save here and there where patches of tender green relieved the rich monotony of colour; while, above all,

> ——————— "the gorgeous sphere
> Lit up the vales, flowers, mountains, leaves, and streams,
> With a diviner day—the spirit of bright beams."

To the eye of taste and the feeling heart, there would have been rapture in every beam of light and breath of heaven, on such a day and amid such scenes. But Glenroy and Benbowie cared for none of these things; though the woods and waters, hills and dales, suggested ideas to them, such as they were, as they sailed along, and they were pleased holding parley in their own way. And "as imagination bodies forth the form of things," so the two friends "turned them to shapes," and gave to "airy nothings a local habitation and a name." Glenroy and Benbowie then, although they could not be said to find "sermons in stones, tongues in the trees,

or books in the running brooks," yet found much profitable matter of discourse in the various objects of nature that presented themselves. The crystal depths of the limpid waters over which the sun was shedding his noonday effulgence, suggested to their minds images of herrings, fat, fresh, or salted, with their accompaniments of casks, nets, and busses; the mountains in their stern glory, with their lights and shadows, and lonely recesses, to them showed forth heath-burning, sheep-walks, black-faced wedders, and wool. The copsewood, tender and harmonious in its colouring, free and graceful in its growth, was, in their language, " hags and stools" of price and promise; and as they touched the shore of Inch Orran, they broke into no idle raptures about the water plants, the fern, the wild flowers, the tall fox-glove, the grey rocks and bright mossy stones, half hid beneath the broad-leafed coltsfoot, that formed the rich and variegated foreground; for they were casting searching looks for " black tang" and " yellow tang," and " bell wrack" and " jagged wrack,' and such other ingredients as enter into the compo-

sition of that valuable commodity called kelp. Such were the speculations which came most home to the business and bosoms of the friends; so grovelling and sordid are the results of human pride and selfishness.

Although the ruins of Inch Orran Castle had an imposing effect when viewed from a distance, the respect they excited was considerably diminished on a nearer survey. They stood on the summit, and close to the edge of a romantic eminence, which rose abruptly from the water, and gave them an air of grandeur, to which they could not have otherwise aspired. The building had been originally in the form of a square, with a court in the centre; but two sides of it were now mere shapeless weather-stained masses of stone, which time was every day crumbling into more picturesque forms, and mantling with ivy and wall-flowers, thus "making beautiful what else were bleak and bare;" while such parts of the building as had fallen down were overgrown with creeping plants and briars, that gave it an appearance of intricacy, and thus heightened the interest which the mouldering and dilapidated

remains of a human dwelling never fail to excite. One side of the square, that next the water, had been repaired, and now formed the dwelling-house; but it was so sombre, and so perfectly in harmony with the rest of the building, that it gave no offence, for it conveyed no impression of any modern usurper having invaded the precincts of the departed: it rather seemed as if some of its former inmates still lingered there amid the wreck of former ages. Glenroy knocked at the door; but it was some time ere his summons was answered. At length a very corpulent, red-faced, sour-looking serving-man appeared, and, after a little seeming hesitation in his own mind, acknowledged that he *believed* his master was at home; then with a slow, toddling, reluctant gait, he led the way to the apartment where sat the Lord of the Castle.

CHAPTER IX.

It was a spacious room, panelled with oak, and handsomely furnished in the modern antique style. Three windows looked upon the loch, and one at the end of the apartment confronted an ivy-mantled tower, which admitted few of day's garish beams, at any time, much less at present, when there stood stationed there the huge person of Mr Duncan M'Dow.

On the entrance of the Chief, he instantly hastened towards him, with his grappling-irons extended; and before Glenroy knew where he was, Benbowie and he were actually led forward in a triumphant manner, and presented by the minister to the master of the house.

"I am amazingly proud," said he, in his loudest and most emphatic manner, "that it has fallen to my lot to introduce my respected friend

and pawtron, Glenroy, to you, Inch Orran, and likewise my very worthy friend, Benbowie; this is really a treat!"

Glenroy certainly had been struck dumb, else he never could have borne this in silence; but he began to rally his forces, although he refrained from breaking out before his kinsman. He therefore merely bit his lip, and cast a look at Mr Duncan, which, if looks could have killed, would certainly have laid the pastor senseless at his feet. He then turned to Inch Orran, who had risen to receive him from before a table, on which lay some law books, ledgers, bundles of papers, and parchments.

Inch Orran was a little meagre sickly-looking man, with a sharp, bitter face, a pair of fiery, vindictive eyes, and a mouth all puckered up, as if to keep in the many cutting things which otherwise would have got out. And indeed it must be owned that but few escaped, in comparison of the multitude that lodged within; for he was one of those gifted individuals who have "un grand talent pour le silence." Neither red cap nor black dog were visible, but, on the contrary, the marks

of the razor were still visible on his chin, and he welcomed his visitors with something that approached to bare civility. However, people may be thankful when they meet with even bare civility from a particular man, and Glenroy was not one to be daunted even by bare civility; so he shook his kinsman heartily by the hand, and expressed his pleasure at seeing him in a very cordial manner.

"You are welcome to the Highlands, Inch Orran," said he warmly; "and I hope you will like us well enough to remain amongst us."

"Sir, I thank you," was the reply, with a full stop.

"When did you arrive, Inch Orran?"

"On Tuesday evening, at a quarter past six, sir," in a loud, sharp, cracked voice.

"I wish I could have prevailed upon you to take up your quarters at Glenroy," said the Chief; "I think I may venture to say, you would have found yourself comfortable there."

"There, sir, you must allow me to judge for myself," was the reply.

Here Mr M'Dow thought was a fit opportunity for him to strike in.

"I assure you, Inch Orran," said he, "however little Glenroy may think of this house in comparison of his own, yet I can only say, I would be very well pleased if I had a room half the size of this in the manse."

"You are very moderate, sir," returned Inch Orran, with a bitter sneer, which was quite thrown away upon Mr M'Dow, who went on—

"This house has been wonderfully well repaired and improved; it's really a most commodious, comfortable dwelling, and most handsomely furnished: but in general it's my opinion a man should not think of adding to, or repairing an old house. A man will never make his plack a bawbee by repairing: for instance, there's the estimate of the addition and repairs for the manse and offices, that I was mentioning to you when my worthy and respected pawtrons came in. My house is really a poor affair; my byre's in a most dreadful state, and my stable's not a great deal better;—and by the by," as if recollecting himself, "I'm not sure but I slipped the estimate into my pocket before I came away." Diving into an enormous pouch, like a sack, he

drew forth a large bundle of papers, which he turned over, as if to ascertain their identity, although every letter was as familiar to him as his own fingers.

" Aye, here it is—estimate of the necessary repairs for the manse, offices, &c. of Auchterbruckle. You can take a glance at it any time you are at leisure, Inch Orran;" upon which he laid it on the table, and making another dive, fished up his snuff-mull, which, shaking and patting, he offered to Inch Orran, who in the same dry, caustic manner, said,

" Sir, snuffing is a practice which I despise and abominate."

" Hoot toot, Inch Orran, you must not say that," cried the undaunted Mr M'Dow, with a great roar of laughter; " here's my excellent friend, Benbowie, has no objections to a snuff any more than myself." Here, Benbowie and he exchanged boxes. " And, by the by, that puts me in mind of a *bong mote* I read in the Edinburgh Caledonian Mercury of the 29th ultimo, that I was very much taken with: I thought it really very good: I really had a good laugh at

it—hach, hach, hach, ho. Two snuffers happened to meet one day, at the Cross, I think it was—Says the one to the other, as they exchanged their mulls, just as we have been doing,—says the one to the other,

" ' A friend's a good thing at a pinch.'

" ' Yes,' says the other, ' but is it not still better for friends to be laying out their money this way, at scent per scent?' "

Here a tremendous volley of laughter broke forth, peal upon peal, roar upon roar, while he rubbed his hands, rocked upon his chair, and threw his body about in all directions, in perfect ecstasy. " Cent per cent, Benbowie, would soon build the manse and mend my byre!" And this witticism was followed by another roar, in which no one joined except Benbowie, who did not know at any time what he laughed at. But Mr M'Dow and his mull were not done yet. " Though you are no snuffer, Inch Orran, you may perhaps admire the setting of my mull; it's a topeuss on the top, a Highland cairngoreum, an uncommon large fine sone. It was given to me in a present by

my excellent friend, Kindullie, on the occasion of my leaving his family. It was a very gratifying token of his regard for me, and of the manner in which he was satisfied I had performed my duty in educating of his seven sons. Our Highland mulls and cairngoreums are all the fashion now, Inch Orran."

"I am no lapidary, sir," said Inch Orran, without deigning even to cast his eyes upon it.

"That's just my own case, Inch Orran!" quoth the undaunted minister. "I know very little about these things myself; I have always had other things to mind, and I have never given much attention to your fashionable gimcracks."

"It's a pity, sir!" said Inch Orran, in that significant tone which would have conveyed the most cutting sarcasm to every ear but that of Duncan M'Dow.

Glenroy all this time was fuming to himself at the laconic dryness of his host on the one hand, and the facetious familiarity of his minister on the other; and indeed a more discordant party scarcely ever met together in friendly semblance; and it seemed in vain to expect any

thing pleasant from such a compound. However, Glenroy thought of the family seat, and the fifty thousand pounds, and he made another attempt to be agreeable.

"You have been a great stranger in Scotland, Inch Orran; it must be a long while since you have visited your own country?"

"Forty years, sir, and upwards."

"Forty years! That is a long time; what wonderful changes you must see!"

"I do see a change, sir; but that is not wonderful."

"The impertinent old cur!" thought Glenroy; "what does he mean by snarling at my words?" And he sat in sullen silence, while the old man kept his scrutinizing eyes fastened upon him with that terrific expression which eyes sometimes have, of being not only eyes, but ears.

"Forty years is a long time," said Benbowie; "on my conscience, it is a very long time."

"If there were any ladies present, Benbowie, you and I, who are bachelors, would not be very keen, maybe, of kenning any thing about forty years," said Mr M'Dow, with a sly wink and a

loud laugh. Then paused, in hopes of being rallied on the subject of his celibacy, but in vain; so he went on—" Many's the gibe I get from my excellent friend Kindullie, about not having provided a dow for my nest yet—ho, hoch, ho !—But I tell him I must first get my dookit before I think of providing a dow for it. Don't you think I'm right, there, Inch Orran?" with a thundering peal of laughter.

" Sir?——"

" O, it's entirely a joke, on both sides—you understand it, Glenroy? I must get my addition, if not an entire new manse and offices, before I can ask a lady to come and preside there. I can give you no Mrs M'Dow till you give me my drawing-room and my byre, at all events. Don't you think that's but reasonable, Inch Orran?"

" Really, Mr M'Dow, this is not a time to introduce your private affairs," said the Chief, haughtily.

" I beg your pardon, Glenroy; but I really must differ from you there. Only consider, here's a meeting of my three principal heritors !

Who knows when I may have such another opportunity, though, I am sure, I trust we may have many pleasant meetings for all that. But, however, since I have the pleasure of seeing my principal heritors convened, I think there can be no harm in just taking a slight glance at my Summons of Augmentation, which, with the interim locality, I happen to have by mere chance about me." And, plunging his arm into the other bottomless gulf of a pocket, out came a huge bunch of papers, from which even Benbowie instinctively drew away his chair. "You see it is no great bulk; you'll soon glance over it. There's first the Summons—that's it, No. I. Summons, at the instance of the Rev. Duncan M'Dow, minister of Auchterbruckle, for an augmentation of stipend, &c. Then there's the interlocutor of the Court, with the interim locality and decreet; for you see, although my allocation is upon the teinds of——"

"I hope you have brought Mrs Malcolm with you, Inch Orran?" said Glenroy, making a desperate attempt to get the better of the teinds.

"Certainly, sir," was the laconic reply.

"I trust I shall have the pleasure of paying my respects to her, then, if convenient?"

"Do you wish to see my wife, sir?" demanded Inch Orran, in no very sweet accent.

"If quite convenient and agreeable, I should be happy to welcome your lady to the Highlands."

Inch Orran rung the bell, which was answered by the fat serving-man. "Be so good, Simon," said he, in a voice like a lamb, "as desire Mrs Malcolm to come here."

"She is dressing, I believe," said Simon.

"Send her here when she is ready, Simon." And Simon, with a bang of the door, withdrew.

CHAPTER X.

In a few minutes the door opened, and the lady entered. She was arrayed in a bright amber silk gown, a full dress cap, decorated with scarlet ribbons, and even more than the usual number of bows that tied nothing, and ends that evidently had no ends to answer, save that of swelling the milliner's bill. She had a mean, vacant countenance, and a pair of most unhandy-looking hands crossed before her, clothed in bright purple gloves, with long empty finger-ends, dangling in all directions. All artists admit, that there is as much character displayed in hands as in heads, and Mrs Malcolm's hands were perfectly characteristic; they proclaimed at once that they could do nothing; that they were utterly helpless, and morally, not physically imbecile.

Inch Orran seemed instinctively aware of her approach, for without looking the way she was, he merely said, "Mrs Malcolm, gentlemen;" and Mrs Malcolm advancing in an awkward, trailing manner, made sundry low curtseys to her guests, and extending her empty finger-ends, (which were eagerly caught at by Mr M'Dow,) she, in a peaking, monotonous voice, expressed her pleasure at sight of them.

Why Mr Malcolm had married Mrs Malcolm, was one of those mysteries which had baffled all conjecture, for she had neither beauty, money, connexions, talents, accomplishments, nor common sense. Not that she was ugly, for she would have looked very well in a toy-shop window. She had pink cheeks, blue eyes, and a set of neat yellow curls ranged round her brow. She was much younger than her husband, and looked still more juvenile than she really was, for not all the contempt and obloquy that had been poured upon her for upwards of twenty years had ever made her change either countenance or colour; in fact, she had neither passions, feelings, nerves—scarcely sensations. She seem-

ed precisely one of those whom Nature had destined to "suckle fools and chronicle small beer;" but fate had denied her the fools, and Inch Orran had debarred her from all interference even with the small beer; for such was his contempt for the sex in general, and for his own portion of it in particular, that he deemed a woman quite incompetent to regulate a household. His domestic concerns were therefore conducted ostensibly by himself, but virtually by his fat serving-man, who was his foster-brother, and had been his factotum long before he married. Even his dress, to the most minute article, was all of Simon's providing. Simon alone knew to a hair the cut and colour of his wig, the pattern of his pocket-handkerchiefs, the texture of his shirts and neckcloths, the precise latitude and longitude of his flannel waistcoats, with various other particulars incident to a particular man. Now, the chief occupation of Mrs Malcolm's life was trailing from shop to shop, in search of any thing or nothing, and she would have liked to have the dressing of Mr Malcolm for the pleasure of buying bargains for him. She

had therefore attempted to wrest this privilege out of Simon's hands, but in vain; she had picked up a pennyworth of a wig, which she said "looked remarkably neat on the head," but which Simon turned up his nose at, and his master threw into the fire. She had haggled till she was hoarse about a dozen of cotton pocket-handkerchiefs, which, after all, Simon pronounced to be perfectly useless, as they were of the diamond pattern, and his master would not blow his nose with any thing but a spot. Her improvements upon flannel jackets had very nearly caused a formal separation, and from that time her active energies not being permitted to exercise themselves either upon her household affairs or her husband's wardrobe, had centered entirely in her own person. She lived in a perpetual, weak, impotent bustle about nothing, spent her money in buying hoards of useless clothes, and her time in looking at them, folding and unfolding them, airing them, locking them up, protecting them from the moths in summer, and mildew in winter, and so on. To crown the whole, she set up for being a sensible woman,

and talked maudlin nonsense by the yard; for she was one of those who would ask if the sea produced corn, rather than hold her tongue. Here it may be remarked, that it requires a great deal of mind to be silent at the right time and place. True, there are some few gifted individuals, whose conversation flows like a continued stream, fertilizing all around, enriching others without impoverishing themselves; but how different from the idle chatter of empty heads, whose only sounds are caused by their own hollowness. "Two things there are, indicative of a weak mind," says Saadi, the Persian sage, "to be silent when it is proper to speak, and to speak when it is proper to be silent." Such was the helpmate of Inch Orran.

"I am happy to see you, gentlemen," said she, in her little tiresome croaking voice; "indeed I'm thankful to see any body, for this is such a lonely out-of-the-way place. I was just saying this morning, what an improvement a town would be on the water side; it would be a great ornament, and of great use in making a stir, and giving employment to poor people, and

very convenient too. I'm surprised it has never struck any body to set such a thing a-going, when there's such a want of employment for the poor."

"Rome was not built in a day, you know, ma'am," said the facetious Mr M'Dow, with one of his loud laughs; "but if you will use your influence with Inch Orran, and prevail upon him to begin, there's no saying where it may end"—another peal—"and I hope the kirk and the manse will not be forgot, Inch Orran."

"Still less the stipend, sir," said Inch Orran, with one of his vicious sneers.

"I'll answer for it the stipend will no get leave to be forgot," returned the incorrigible Mr M'Dow, with one of his loudest roars; "you may trust the minister for keeping you in mind of that."

"I believe I may, sir."

"And let it be a good one at the first, Inch Orran, that he may not have such a battle to fight for his augmentation as I have had. I really think the Teind Court has taken an entire wrong view of the subject there, or they

would have given me the decreet at once.—You'll no go along with me there, Glenroy."

But Glenroy disdained to reply, so the little old man said, "It was the saying, sir, of one of the wisest judges who ever sat upon the Scottish bench, that a *poor* clergy made a *pure* clergy—a maxim which deserves to be engraven in letters of gold on every manse in Scotland."

"Deed, then, I can tell you, Inch Orran, the gold would be very soon piket off," returned Mr M'Dow, with redoubled bursts of laughter. "Na, na, you must keep the gold for your fine English Episcopalian palaces, where it's no so scarce as it's among us;" and Mr M'Dow perfectly revelled in the delight of this *jeu d'esprit.* Mrs Malcolm now struck in. "I'm quite tormented with these midges. I don't think they'll leave the skin upon me. I wish they would bite you, Mr Malcolm."

"Perhaps, sir, you would wish some refreshment," said Inch Orran, addressing Glenroy, in a voice louder aud shriller than that with which Punch denounces Polly. The Chief, who was still under the influence of a late and luxurious

breakfast, declined; but upon the same offer (if offer it could be called) being put to Benbowie, he was so little in the habit of refusing any thing, except to give money, and besides had such a willing appetite, that he at once greedily assented. Mr M'Dow rubbed his hands, drew out his pocket-handkerchief, placed his hands upon his knees, and began snuffing the air, as though he already caught the scent of some savoury mess.

The bell was faintly rung by Inch Orran, but some minutes elapsed, and no one answered.

"That's always the way with that Simon," said Mrs Malcolm; "I'm sure I wish we had a well-behaved, clever, active boy, for"——

But a bitter look, and a sh—sh, from her lord, stopped her tongue, while a fierce tingle of the bell brought forth Simon.

"Refreshments, if you please, Simon," said his master, in a softer tone and manner than he had yet evinced.

"Refreshments, sir?" repeated Simon, putting his hand to his forehead, with an air of great perplexity.

"I think some warm broth would be the best

thing in such a warm day," said Mrs Malcolm; "for, when people are warm, they should never take any thing cold—it's very dangerous—I had an aunt once"——

"Something cold, Simon," said his master, decidedly.

"Cold, sir?" repeated Simon; then, seeming to recollect himself, he withdrew.

Then ensued a great deal of heavy tramping to and fro, and a mighty clattering of plates, knives and forks, which was music to the ears of Benbowie and Mr M'Dow.

At length entered Simon, and, with much seeming exertion, began to rub down a table (although there was neither speck nor spot upon it) in the most ostentatious manner, puffing and blowing all the while, as though he had been in the tread-mill.

"Take care of the carpet, Simon," said his mistress; but Simon seemed as though he heard her not. He then unfolded and carefully laid a table-cloth with mathematical precision, retiring a few paces to judge of its general effect,

and then returning to adjust what his eye pronounced to be amiss.

"I think the cloth should be rather more this way, Simon," said his mistress, drawing it towards her, with an air of great importance.

"Tut," muttered Simon, as he jerked it in the contrary direction.

Once more he withdrew, and another pause ensued, during which Glenroy made another attempt to draw his host into conversation.

"This is a beautiful situation of yours, Inch Orran," said he,—"I really know nothing finer."

"It is a very *desirable* property, sir," returned the old man, with marked emphasis.

"You have one of the noblest views in Scotland from these windows," said the Chief, proudly, as he looked on his own princely domain.

"It may be, sir; but I have other things to look to than fine views on this neglected property," replied Inch Orran.

"That's precisely my own case, Inch Orran," said Mr M'Dow. "One person has been saying, when they came to the manse, 'O what a beau-

tiful situation, Mr M'Dow!' Another says, 'Oh, such a grand view, Mr M'Dow!' Another cries, 'I really think you beat Glenroy himself, in your prospects, Mr M'Dow.' That may all be, says I; but the best prospects I have in view are a comfortable manse, an addition to the glebe, and the decreet for my augmentation. Ho, hoch, hoch, ho."

Neither Glenroy nor Inch Orran took the smallest notice of this sally; and the former continued to address the latter.

"I have the advantage of you in one respect, Inch Orran; for this place of yours forms one of the finest features in the view from my drawing-room windows; though, without vanity, I may say Glenroy is also a very fine object from yours."

"Probably, sir, *you* may have more pleasure in the view of *my* property than I have in contemplating yours."

Glenroy felt his cheek flush at this palpable hit; but just then the door was thrown wide open, and Simon appeared with his arms at full stretch, bearing a tray, which he deposited on a

side-table, and then proceeded to arrange its contents with the same bustling importance.

At the top of the table was placed the wizened nib of a tongue, and *vis-à-vis* the almost bare blade-bone of a shoulder of mutton; on one side, a thin slice of bread was confronted with a few potatoes; at the corners were a jug of whey, and another of water; a decanter containing a few glasses of port, and a bottle of currant wine, stale and sour, and tasting, as currant wine sometimes does, of brown sugar, blue paper, yellow soap, cork, candle, twine, and vinegar.

The two expectants had felt their appetites considerably damped at sight of the cheer provided for them; they, however, seated themselves, though with rueful faces. To do them justice, neither of them were nice, but they both loved a savoury mess, something to make a slop with; something to eat with their knives—what they ought to eat with their forks. But, alas! here was no room for such a display; for, though Mr M'Dow, as the younger and stronger man, contrived both to cut and chew the inflexible remains of the tongue, poor Benbowie was com-

pletely baffled in the attempt; and all he could do was to crumble down a bit of bread, and spill half a glass of wine on the table-cloth, after which he declared he had had enough—quite enough, on his conscience. While the master of the revels drank to the health of his guests very graciously in a glass of green whey.

"I shall let the old miser see what good living is!" thought Glenroy, as he began a pompous and pressing invitation to his kinsman to spend a few days with him, accompanied by ostentatious offers of barge, pinnace, carriages, horses, servants, &c.—"It is *my* intention to spend a couple of days with you, sir, before I leave the country," replied Inch Orran; "and, if agreeable to you, when I can make it convenient to myself, I shall not fail to apprise you."

This was more than Glenroy had expected, or perhaps wished for, now that he had experienced the nature of the man; but, of course, he was all pleasure, gratification, and so forth. A hope was then expressed that Mrs Malcolm would join the party.

"Most certainly, sir," replied Inch Orran. "*I* keep no separate establishment for my wife."

"I'm sure I shall be very happy to go," said she; "for I'll be thankful to go any where, this is such a dull place. Only, if the ladies here dress much to go out to dinner, I'm sure I don't know what I shall do, Mr Malcolm, for a cap for——" But a—"sh—sh," and a wave of his hand from her husband, stopped her mouth, and the visitors took leave.

As they traversed the long passage, they descried Simon at the other extremity, waddling along with a foaming tankard in one hand, and a long-necked bottle in the other; and, at the same time, the nostrils of Benbowie and Mr M'Dow were assailed with the smell of some very gusty viands, towards which Mr Simon seemed to have been steering his course.

The half-open door of a housekeeper's room, from whence issued the fragrance, induced them both to thrust in their heads; and there stood disclosed a table neatly laid for two, with a smoking tureen of hodge-podge, and a magnificent jowl of salmon. At this sight the two

stood as if entranced, with open mouths and outstretched necks; but it was of short duration; for directly a quick foot—an invisible hand—and the door was shut with an angry slap.

"On my conscience! but I would rather be the man than the master," said Benbowie, with a grunt of dissatisfaction, as he followed his friend to the barge.

"At least, I would rather take pot-luck with him," said Mr M'Dow, with a faint attempt at a laugh, as, with a discomfited air, he betook himself to his Amailye, (as he had christened his pony, in honour of the Lady Kindullie,) and trotted away in quest of better cheer.

CHAPTER XI.

GLENROY returned home much dissatisfied with his visit. He had been provoked at the dry impertinence of the old man, disgusted with the tiresome weakness of his wife, and incensed beyond measure at the innumerable offences of Mr M'Dow. Neither was his ill-humour appeased, when, at the end of a week, he received the following dispatch, written in the plainest, and squarest, and most inflexible of hands.

"Mr Mungo Malcolm presents his compliments to Mr Norman Malcolm of Glenroy, and if still convenient for him to receive a visit, Mr Mungo Malcolm will, in pursuance of his original intention, wait upon him on Wednesday next, the 20th ult., in the course of the afternoon, and purposes to be his guest till the following Saturday forenoon, when he positively takes

leave. Mr M. Malcolm will be accompanied by his wife and male servant."

Glenroy chafed like a boar at being thus addressed as Mr Norman Malcolm, and scouted the whole style of the billet; but it is much to be wished that the world in general, and many very worthy people in particular, would follow the example of Mr Mungo Malcolm, in thus precisely marking the limits of their intended stay.

All householders, whatever they may pretend, must at some period or other have groaned under the indefinable misery of an undefined length of visit, and every family must have felt the want of a chronometer, for ascertaining the respective ideas of both parties, as to the reasonable latitude and longitude of a visit. In good old times, Scotland had its regular standard measure for visiting, as it had for its oatmeal and potatoes. A rest day, a dress day, and a press day, were the appointed measure of a visitor's days. The first was consecrated to repose, after the fatigues of the journey, whether there had been a journey or not; the second was allotted to showing off the full-dress suit, prepared perhaps for the occasion;

and the third was delicately appropriated to the pressing solicitations of the host, and always conferred as an act of bounty over and above. Thus both parties were pleased, the presser and the pressed; the presser at having conquered, the pressed at having conceded; and thus they parted, happy to part, happy to meet, and happy to part again.

But since this barrier has been broken down by modern innovation, visiting has no longer any limits, except such as exist in the minds of the respective parties; and, accordingly, "there's the respect" that makes cautious people pause before bringing upon themselves a visit. A visit! how vague—how undefined—how dark—how immeasurable—how obscure—how unfathomable—how mysterious—is a visit! A visit may be meant for a day, or a week, or a month; and it may be taken for a winter, or a summer, or a year! A visit may be the cement of friendship, or it may be the bane of domestic happiness! A visit may be like an angel's coming, brief and rare, or it may be like a wounded crocodile, drawing its slow length along.

But none of these evils could befall the host of Mr Mungo Malcolm, for the day, and hour, and minute of his departure were always settled, as upon this occasion, long before his arrival. Glenroy anticipated any thing but pleasure from this visit, but he comforted himself by considering it as a compliment, and the next thing to being declared heir to Inch Orran. He therefore resolved to pay all honour to his guest, and to win his heart by the good cheer and gaiety he would provide for him.

The appointed day arrived—a raw, bleak, chill, unhappy-looking day; not stormy enough to be grand, but just rough enough to be disagreeable. The hills were covered with mist, the sky with clouds, the sea with foam, and doubts were entertained whether the old man would venture forth on such a day, when, in the midst of mist, and clouds, and rain, and foam, a little black dripping boat was descried rowing along, which being run ashore, out stepped Inch Orran, his aspect completely harmonizing with that of nature. Next was dragged forth Mrs Malcolm, a mass of cloaks and shawls. Next

followed Simon, with a small bundle under his arm, his person snugly ensconced beneath a large umbrella, which he affected to hold carefully over his lady, but of which she got only the droppings.

The Laird and his lady were welcomed by Glenroy with every demonstration of courtesy and good-will. They were received by him in his great hall, decorated with banners, and broadswords, and dirks, and claymores, and targets, and deers' heads, and warlike trophies of every description, amidst which a consequential full-plumed piper paced to and fro. Altogether, the effect was grand and imposing, but it was quite lost upon the guests. Inch Orran, if he noticed at all, noticed only to hate such trumpery, and his lady did not know a dirk from a deer's horn. Glenroy's attempts at striking them with awe on their first entrance, were therefore all in vain; it was to no purpose that he pointed out the stately banner of one chief, and the singular dirk of another, and related anecdotes pertaining to each.

Inch Orran's horrid listening eyes were bent straight upon him, but he never opened his lips

unless to utter a monosyllable. But still more enraging was his lady's commotion, upon discovering that she had lost one of her gloves; it was a new glove, a pink glove, a French glove, a habit glove; it was the fellow of the glove she had on; she must have left it in the boat, or it must have fallen into the sea, or she must have dropped it on the road, or Simon *must* have seen it, or it *must* be in Mr Malcolm's pocket, for it could not be lost, and it was not about her; and she shook herself round and round in testimony thereof. These her surmises and lamentations were uttered in a low, slow, monotonous tone to Benbowie and Mrs Macauley, as with a *dementit* air she looked all round about, and not seeing her pink glove, she saw nothing else. Mrs Macauley and Benbowie bestirred themselves with all their might in search of the stray glove, for it was a case that came home to both their bosoms; they had each lost gloves at different periods of their lives, they therefore knew what it was to lose a glove. They entered into the nature of the loss; they did not idly sympathize in it, they exerted themselves to seek for it,

they wondered for it, they lamented for it, they poked about for it in all improbable as well as impossible places; in short, all the energies of their heads, hearts, and hands, were put in motion for the recovery of the glove, but in vain.

Simon was next summoned, and he ended the matter at once by boldly declaring, that he had seen the glove drop into the water as his lady was coming out of the boat, and that just as he was trying to recover it, a monstrous wave had swept it away, and he could see no more of it.

"I'm sure I never know whether to believe Simon or not," said the lady to Mrs Macauley; "for I think he'll say any thing just to save himself trouble."*

A rich repast, under the head of luncheon, was now served up; but this Inch Orran refused point blank even to approach, and, upon being pressed by his host to partake, in a manner that savoured more of hospitality, than of free will left

* It will doubtless be a relief to the compassionate reader to learn, that the glove was all this while in Mrs Malcolm's own pocket.

to his guest, he said in his most peremptory manner, "Sir, I make it a rule to dine but once a-day." This was uttered in a tone not to be disputed; but he added, in a somewhat softer key, "but I request, sir, I may be no restraint on your usual practices," and motioning his host towards the table, he betook himself to a far-off corner of the room, the most remote and inaccessible, where he began to read a newspaper, and Glenroy, already boiling at his dogged impertinence, left him to chew the cud of his own reflections, while he did the honours of the banquet.

CHAPTER XII.

THE party were scarcely seated, when young Norman came bounding into the apartment in all the exuberance of unchecked animal spirits, just let loose from the restraints of the school-room, and evidently master of his own actions everywhere else. He was a handsome sprightly boy, with a haughty careless air, that showed he was already aware of his own importance. He eyed Inch Orran for a moment, with a look that seemed to say, "Who are you?" as he brushed past him to the table, followed by a large greyhound.

"Go and shake hands with that gentleman, Norman," said his father; "that is Inch Orran." But Norman heard as though he heard him not.

"I am *so* hungry, papa," said he, casting a wandering glance from dish to dish all over the

table; "I hope you have got something good for me—O do make haste, pray—No, no, I won't have a mutton-chop," drawing away his plate quickly as Mrs Macauley was preparing to help him; then, as suddenly retracting, "Yes, you may give me one for Fingal—Here Fin, Fin, my pretty fellow, here is a mutton-chop for you—now eat it like a gentleman, and don't grease the carpet."

"Norman, did you hear me desire you to go and shake hands with our friend Inch Orran?" said Glenroy, in a more authoritative tone.

"Yes, papa, I will presently, but——"

"Go then, sir, when I desire you," cried the Chief, in rising displeasure.

"Yes, papa—Ah! ham-pie, that is so good!" and he jumped and shook his hands in ecstasy. "Now, do give me some, papa, there is nothing I love so much."

"Unless you do as I desire you, sir, deuce a bit of any thing you shall taste to-day," cried Glenroy, angrily; his authority over his son always requiring to be backed by a threat, or a bribe, or an oath; sometimes by all three.

"Well, then, remember you promised me some ham-pie, papa;" and, slowly approaching Inch Orran, with his head riveted to the table, and his eye upon the dish, he extended his hand to him; but it met with no corresponding movement on the part of Inch Orran, whose hands remained firmly closed before him. Nowise disconcerted, however, his young kinsman made a sort of snatch at his hand, and then, satisfied he had done his part, skipped away back to enjoy the reward of his obedience. Glenroy took a glance at the old man in the corner, but he did not like his look. His lips were drawn in till they were invisible; his cheeks were distended like Æolus's bags, and his eyes glared like a cat's in the dark. His lady was all this while seated between Benbowie and Mrs Macauley, and enjoying herself to her heart's content in conversing with them.

"What's become of Reginald and Edith to-day?" enquired Glenroy, and at that moment the sound of young voices in the hall seemed to answer the question. Fingal pricked up his ears, and wagged his tail, while his master sprung up

and bounded away, followed by his favourite, who almost jumped over Inch Orran, in his eagerness to gain the door.

"What are these children about?" demanded Glenroy angrily, as the uproar increased.

"You *must* come in—you *shall* come in—don't let him go—hold him fast," resounded through the hall, and presently entered a youthful group, consisting of the three children of the house, all hanging round a fine manly-looking boy, dripping wet, and evidently of a different stock from his more dainty-looking companions.

"There is Ronald, papa," whispered Edith, as she ran up to her father.

"Well, and what of that?" answered he in a dissatisfied tone. "Do you see no greater strangers than him here, that you should be making all this noise?"

Edith blushed, and turned to Mrs Malcolm; then, but with still more timidity, went to Inch Orran, who, relaxing from his sternness, took the little hand that was held out to him, and even bestowed a pat on the head, as if to make

up for the rebuff she had met with from her father. Meanwhile the two boys had compelled their guest to approach to the table, quite unconscious of the haughty looks with which Glenroy regarded him.

"Now you are our prisoner," cried Norman; "so sit down, and you shall have something to eat, though you deserve to be fed on bread and water, for attempting to escape.—Here, Fin, at him, if he offers to stir without my leave."

"How your dirty shoes have stained my trowsers," said Reginald pettishly, as he rubbed some spots of mud from his white trowsers; "I wish I hadn't gone near you; and I am so hot," putting his fingers through his hair; and throwing himself at full length upon two chairs, he began to fan himself with a napkin.

"So, Master Ronald, what has brought you here this bad day?" enquired the Chieftain, in no very encouraging accent.

The boy coloured, as if he felt the rudeness of the enquiry; then answered, "I came to return Norman's fishing-rod."

"Phoo—there could be no hurry in that," said the Chief, still more coldly.

"I had *promised* to bring it to-day," said Ronald.

"Pshaw, what signified that," said Norman carelessly; "you needn't have got yourself wet for a promise, if that was all."

"I would rather have to swim for my life than break my word," said Ronald warmly.

The two boys burst into a fit of laughing.

"On my conscience, but there's a great difference," said Benbowie, with a look of alarm.

"Come, come, let us have no more nonsense," said Glenroy impatiently; "and if you're for any thing to eat, boys, make haste, for every body's done."

Ronald declined the ungracious invitation, and was retiring, when he was again seized by his two friends.

"O, you know, you are our prisoner; so you needn't attempt to get away. You *must* stay, and you *shall* eat. So sit down."

"*Must* and *shall?*" repeated Ronald, with a smile; while his open countenance and fine

intrepid air showed that he yielded more from good-humour than from false shame or fear; for he wore

> ——" upon his forehead clear
> The freedom of a mountaineer;
> A face with gladness overspread,
> And looks by human kindness bred."

Altogether there was an air of noble, artless simplicity about the boy extremely prepossessing, and rendered still more striking when contrasted with the more artificial elegance of his companions, and the saucy capricious airs of superiority which marked the children of consequence.

" Now, although you are a prisoner," said Norman, " I shall allow you to choose for yourself. What will you have? Here is a ham-pie which I can recommend.—Papa, I told Barclay that I thought he had put rather too many truffles and morels in the last, and not enough of eggs; and, by the by, plover's eggs are much the best.—If you like venison, Ronald, here is a hash, which is by far the best way of eating venison, at least in my opinion."

"I'll take a mutton-chop," said Ronald, helping himself to what was next him.

"A mutton-chop! horrible! that's Fingal's dish; but he wouldn't eat them now, for they are almost cold."

"It is very good," said Ronald, eating with a hearty appetite.

"Perhaps you choose a cold potatoe too," said Reginald, contemptuously holding one up.

"Warm ones are better," said Ronald, taking a potatoe; "but I don't care—it doesn't signify."

"No; to be sure, if people have no taste, it does *not* signify," said Norman, piqued at the indifference of his guest, and bent upon showing his power and consequence, especially before such queer-looking people, as Inch Orran and his lady.

"You are quite wet, Ronald," said Edith softly, as she put her hand on his arm. Then whispered to her father, "Pray, papa, give Ronald a glass of wine."

"Here's a glass of wine for you," said Glenroy, pouring it out ungraciously, and as if he

wished to end the scene; but Ronald declined taking it.

"Do take it, dear Ronald," said Edith.

"We shall *make* him take it," said the young heir, whose hospitality was of the most peremptory nature.

"If I was to take it for any body, it would be for Edith," said Ronald; "but I don't choose any wine, thank you."

"Come, drink it off, and go away and amuse yourselves somewhere else," cried Glenroy, in a very bad humour.

Ronald instantly rose, but was again seized by his two tormentors.

"O you shall not stir till you have drank it to the last drop."

And Norman, taking the glass of wine, would have forced it to his lips; but he shook him off.

"Nothing will make me drink wine," said he, firmly.

"Oh, you are a Turk, a Mussulman!—a Turk, a Turk!" shouted the two boys in derision.

"He is an obstinate dog," said Glenroy; "let

him alone." Ronald's colour rose, but he said nothing.

"What is the reason you refuse to drink, my boy?" demanded Inch Orran, emerging from his corner, where he had been an attentive spectator of all that had passed. Ronald met his sharp inquisitive glance with the clear ingenuous expression of his full blue eye; but he was silent for a moment, then said,

"Because my father wishes me not to drink wine."

"And why?"

Ronald cast down his eyes.

"O, I know the reason now," whispered the two boys, nodding to each other with half-suppressed smiles, then whispering, "it's because they're so poor."

Ronald instantly shook off his embarrassment, and looking up, said, "He can't afford to give us wine at home."

"On my conscience, and that's the very reason you should get leave to take it when you can get it elsewhere," said Benbowie.

"Well, well, we have had enough of this,"

cried Glenroy, impatiently; "go away, and divert yourselves elsewhere, children.—Good morning, Mr Ronald."

And Ronald, in spite of the forcible attempts of his friends to detain him, shook them off with ease, and darted away in the midst of a heavy rain.

"That's the son of Jack Malcolm of Lochdhu?" said Inch Orran, fixing his inquisitorial eyes full upon Glenroy, who felt that an apology was due for this ill-timed meeting with the son of the man he detested, and he replied, "Yes. I'm sorry this should have happened, Inch Orran—but the father is a tacksman of mine—I couldn't be off letting him have a farm that joined to his own bit of property, and that boy has got a sort of footing here through the children; they're glad of companions near their own age."

"How many children has Jack Malcolm?" asked the old man, abruptly.

"About a dozen, I believe," said Glenroy, contemptuously.

"And that is his eldest son?"

"Yes; and if he had been mine, and I had

been in his father's situation, he shouldn't have been idling away his time at home. I gave them my advice, which was to send that boy to some cheap public school in England, where he would learn something of the world, which is the thing for a boy that has his way to make in it. But they wouldn't hear of it; said they would rather live upon bread and water than send any child of theirs to a great school. However, they are not just at that, for they can at least give them kail and porridge;" with a laugh of derision.

A spark shot from the corner of Inch Orran's eye, as he turned abruptly away, muttering something between his teeth. The rain fell without intermission for the rest of the day, which seemed of endless duration to both parties, and Glenroy was at last obliged to have recourse to Mrs Macauley's much despised musical powers to wile away the time.

CHAPTER XIII.

The following day cleared up, and there was a bright sun, and a sweet blowing wind, and every thing looked gay, and every body pleased, except Inch Orran, who minded neither sun nor wind, and was alike insensible to the charms of nature and the influence of weather.

Glenroy had invited a large party, that is, he had summoned all who were within call to do honour to his kinsman's visit, and the house (which indeed was seldom empty) had continued to fill during the whole morning with invited guests, as also with chance droppers-in of various descriptions. The Chief felt as if there was safety from his kinsman's ill-humour in the multitude that surrounded him; his courage rose, his spirits revived, and he was himself again. But it was a transitory calm. The dinner hour

was drawing near, the guests were all assembled, when suddenly, borne on the breeze, came the distant neighing of a steed. Glenroy started and turned red; another and another loud, and long, and shrill, and joyful burst; it was the well-known happy neigh of Amailye, announcing the approach of Mr Duncan M'Dow! Had the castle possessed a drawbridge, it certainly would have been raised on the instant, but as there were neither javelin-men nor moat to oppose him, the minister rode boldly on, arrayed as usual in his large woolly great-coat and red worsted comforter.

Mrs Malcolm caught the *sough* of his name, and thereupon thought proper to address Glenroy.

"Is that the Mr M'Dow that was so good as to call one day at Inch Orran? what an uncommon pleasant, sensible, well-informed man he is! I was really very much pleased with him; he's so polite and well-bred, and has so much to say; he seems a very superior man; it must be a great advantage to have such a man for a clergyman, and I'm sure you have great credit in your

choice, for there's really something so very—ahem—a—so uncommonly—a—a—so much of the gentleman about him."

Glenroy disdained to reply.

Here the announcement of Mr M'Dow put a stop to the remarks, and presently his heavy foot announced itself. Although there was a large assemblage of ladies and gentlemen present, Mr M'Dow, as usual, made a point of grappling with each individually, right and left, here and there, cross hands and down baeks, in the most indefatigable manner. Then fastening upon his host, he burst out with one of his *avant courier* roars of laughter.

" Well, Glenroy, there's one thing, I'm sure, you'll not say of me, as was said of a poor friend of mine, who was thought rather neglectful of his parish in the visiting way, and something too metapheesical in his discoorses from his pulpit—it was really very neatly said—ho, hoch, how—that he was a most wonderful man, for he was invisible six days in the week, and incomprehensible on the seventh; very clever, rather

severe, to be sure, but it was really just the truth—how, how, ho, hoch."

Glenroy was not like Hamlet. He could have used daggers, but he could not speak them. He did not excel in repartée at any time, for when provoked, he was instantly in a passion; and not daring to give scope to it in the present instance, all he could do was to dart a furious glance at the intruder, and turn on his heel. But heel or toe, it was all one to the minister, who was quite insensible to all rebuffs, especially as he met with a warm reception from such of the party, as, being more remote and inaccessible in their dwellings, and having nothing to say as to the augmentation, were not favoured with so much of his company in their own houses.

And as one person of easy manners—no matter how vulgar—is always acceptable to the guests, whatever he may be to the host, Mr M'Dow's bad jokes and hearty laugh were very palatable to some of the party, who found them much more relishing than the overbearing pomp of Glenroy, or the morose silence of Inch Orran. Mr M'Dow, therefore, was very soon riding on

the rigging of his own good spirits; and peal upon peal, roar upon roar, followed in quick succession, and raised many an echo from the lower orders of the company. His staying to dinner was a matter of course. In the first flush of his gratified feelings, at having got the man of his choice, a moderate man, an honest fellow, and also pleased with the convivial habits, and jolly manners which he saw would be no restraint on his own, Glenroy had in a rash moment given him a general invitation to his house, which the minister had not been slack in availing himself of, particularly if there was any thing going on that promised better cheer, or more amusement than common. As surely, therefore, as Glenroy had any new arrivals of consequence, or a larger, or more ceremonious party than usual, or an extraordinary influx of company, or any strangers of great distinction, he might depend upon Mr M'Dow's dropping in. It was quite wonderful how and where he acquired such speedy and certain intelligence; for in a remote and thinly-peopled country, where dwellings were few and far between, it could neither be by see-

ing, or hearing, or smelling. But so it was; no wild Indian could have tracked his prey with greater certainty and finesse than Mr M'Dow did a good dinner; indeed, nothing could surpass the accuracy and success with which he followed the trail of a jolly party, or what he termed "an innocent recreation."

Glenroy having surmounted the first shock of his appearance, though still boiling with wrath against him, resolved to make it plain that his company was not expected at dinner, and therefore said, in his stateliest manner, "You are too late for luncheon, Mr M'Dow; but if you wish for any refreshment, I shall order some to the eating-room for you."

"You are really extremely kind and considerate, Glenroy," replied his guest, with much hearty warmth of manner; "but it is quite unnecessary in you to put yourself to that trouble, as I had a snack at your friend Captain Malcolm's; and indeed I was pressed to stay still there, which I would have done, if I had not previously intended myself the honour of taking my potluck with you, as you were so very polite

as to assure me of being always welcome; a piece of kindness and hospitality which I am sure I shall never forget."

"That's just as it should be," remarked a Laird who had three ferrics between him and Mr M'Dow. "There ought always to be an open door to the minister."

"It's a pleasant thing to see the heritors and ministers on a friendly footing," said another, whose teinds were valued and exhausted.

"In that respect, I have really reason to be proud," said Mr M'Dow, rapping his mull with an air of modest importance; "for ever since my induction, I have met with uncommon attention and hospitality, not only from my respected pawtron here, but likewise from the very gentlemen who thought proper to oppose the presentation. There's Captain Malcolm, for instance, he was very keen against me; more so, indeed, than what many men in my situation would have overlooked. But he's a little of the highflyer: the very—hem—the unco gude—hoch, hoch, how! one o' your gospellers, in short; what one of my worthy brethren calls your saunts—hoch,

hoch, ho! but I believe he is a well-meaning man for all that, so I made a point of showing him that I bore no ill-will against him, and that I had no objections whatever to be on a friendly footing with him," with another long self-sufficient pinch of snuff.

"He's a very honest man, Captain Malcolm," said a good-natured bluff laird; "and has as fine a family as I ever saw, and as well brought up, too. There's not a prettier girl in all the shire than Lucy Malcolm; and he'll be a lucky man that gets her for his wife."

Mr M'Dow now addressed Inch Orran,—"I was just saying, sir, that I had the pleeshure this forenoon of paying my respects to a very worthy gentleman, a clansman, and, I believe, a relation of yours—Captain John Malcolm." A slight, stiff bend from Inch Orran was the only reply; but Mr M'Dow went on.—"My principal object in calling on him to-day was, that I wished particularly to see a set of farm-offices which I heard he had lately built, and also some improvements which he had made upon his house; and I thought I might pick up some

useful hints from them, to lay before my excellent pawtron here, especially in respect of a byre. There's nothing in my remembrance that there's been greater improvements in than in byres. However, I must say I was disappointed; he has made no addition of any signification to the house; and the offices are really upon a very moderate scale—very much so—extremely moderate, indeed."

"I understood, sir, moderation had been a favourite virtue of yours," said Inch Orran, dryly.

"Ay—yes—to be sure, in some things—indeed in most things, I may say, moderation is the safest coorse. Moderation will never lead a man far wrong, Inch Orran."

"Yes, sir, it leads a man far wrong, if it keeps him from doing his duty," returned Inch Orran.

"There I quite agree with you, Inch Orran—there can be no doubt of that. But, in respect of the offices—it's really my unprejudiced opinion, that when a man has his hand in the mortar tub, a little money, more or less, is ill saved, when the question is between a good, handsome,

complete building, and a poor, paltry, insignificant thing. I used the freedom to say something of that sort to the Captain himself, but he only laughed and shook his head, and said he had eight strong reasons against extravagance—pointing to his children.—Ay, to be sure, there's no arguing against such facts as these, Captain, says I; they're the next thing to the Ten Commandments — hoch, hoch, hoch!—how, ho!" Here, strong in conscious freedom, Mr M'Dow roared and laughed, rapped upon his mull, drew in about a quarter of a pound of snuff, and displayed all the extent of a Pulicat handkerchief.

At dinner things were, if possible, still worse. The manse and the byre, to be sure, were forgot, while he revelled amidst a profusion of fish, flesh, fowl, and game, of every description, with the ardour of a man who, with all the inclination, had not the means of faring sumptuously every day. The rest of the party ate, drank, talked, and disputed in the usual manner, all save Inch Orran, who ate little, drank none, and preserved a profound silence, except when now and then provoked to utter some sharp and biting sarcasm.

CHAPTER XIV.

THERE is something very appalling in the silence that precedes a storm. At such a time the imagination and the conscience are left to the full and undisturbed exercise of their powers; and, however vague and undefined may be their operations, they nevertheless continue to oppress us with that deadliest of all fears—"the fear of something yet to come."

It was probably this instinctive dread which had made Glenroy hitherto shun every approach to a tête-à-tête with his silent guest; but as the hour of his departure drew near, he began to muster his courage, and to consider that it was due to himself to come to some sort of understanding with the old man, as to the strange bearing he had held ever since his arrival. It

was impossible he could have met with any real ground of offence, for every thing had been done to grace his visit, and gain his good-will; but something might have occurred which he was not aware of, or there might have been some imaginary failure that had given umbrage, and a few words of explanation might set all to rights. For this purpose, therefore, Glenroy sought a private interview with his guest, the morning of his departure, and began in the usual terms, by expressing his regret at the prospect of losing him so soon, mingled with gentle upbraidings at the shortness of his stay, hopes of his speedy return, and of being favoured with a longer visit. Then Inch Orran spoke, and he said very deliberately,

"Sir, this is my first visit, and it will be my last."

This was coming to the point with a vengeance. Glenroy was startled, but drawing himself up he said, "I flatter myself, Inch Orran, you have found nothing wanting on my part to make your stay here pleasant?"

"Have I made any complaint, sir?" was the true Scottish answer.

"I should be sorry if you, or any man, had any thing to complain of in my house," replied the Chieftain, proudly.

Inch Orran smiled, that is, he uncurled his little purse-mouth for the first time since his arrival; but it was a scornful ill-omened smile.

"I—I'm at a loss to understand you, Inch Orran—'pon my soul I am. I am used to speak my mind to every man, and I expect every man to do the same to me," said Glenroy, waxing warm.

"I have no objection to speak my mind to you, sir," said Inch Orran, with a horrid gleam of his little vindictive eye; "but are you quite sure you have none to hear it?"

"I don't know why I should," returned the Chief, affecting great coolness, to conceal the abhorrence which all men, women, and children, feel at that awful and portentous threat, whether from friend or foe, of speaking their mind. It is then "conscience makes cowards of us all," as it did of Glenroy, who, in spite of the high opinion he had of himself, felt an instinctive dread at the idea of Inch Orran speaking his mind

either *to* him or *of* him. And indeed speaking the mind is generally understood to mean neither more nor less, than that the speaker means to be most thoroughly disagreeable and abusive.

There was, however, no escaping Inch Orran's mind, or rather matter, as he looked exactly like a tiger cat who had got his claw stuck hard and fast in his prey, and was in no hurry to dispatch it.

"Then, sir, on what particular point is it that you wish me to speak my mind?" demanded he, with the firmness of a rock. This was much too precise for Glenroy, who would rather have kept in vague generals than have been brought to particular points, and who, moreover, had expected the questions to be all on his side, the answers on the other.

"I—don't think—in—a—I, in short, I—don't think you seem to have been pleased with something or another, Inch Orran?" said Glenroy, with some awkward hesitation.

"I don't say that I have, sir."

"Then, sir, I wish you would have the goodness to say what it is you complain of; have you

met with any thing to offend you in me or any of my family ?" demanded the Chief, strong in conscious importance.

Inch Orran was silent for a moment, then answered in the most decided manner, " I have, sir."

" I'm sorry to hear it, Inch Orran ; very sorry indeed that you or any body else should have met with any thing unpleasant in my house, or should consider yourself as having been ill used by me or any of my family."

" Sir, you mistake me ; I never said I had been ill used."

" I beg pardon ; but I certainly understood you to say so, Inch Orran."

" Then, sir, you *mis*understood me."

" I'm happy to hear it, Inch Orran ; for I assure you I should have been very sorry if any misunderstanding had taken place between us ; for there are few men for whom I entertain a higher respect than I do for you."

" Excuse me, sir, there *is* a misunderstanding."

" Sir," said the Chief, " I am really at a loss

to understand you. If I have failed in any attentions——"

"No want of attention, sir," in a tone as much as to say, "rather too much of it."

"Has there been any thing in any of the company to offend you, Inch Orran?"

"Much!" pronounced in a most emphatic manner; then, after a little pause, "every thing, and in all of them, sir."

"Indeed! upon my soul, sir, you are ill to please! You have met with some of the first gentlemen in the county, I can tell you, whatever you may think."

Again his mouth was contemptuously curled, while the Chief took a turn up and down the room to cool himself; he then stopped, and having gulped down his anger, said, "Come, come, Inch Orran, I see how it is; you are a sober man yourself, and you have been a little scandalized at seeing some of my friends take their glass so freely; but every country has its own customs, you know, and I did'nt suppose you expected to find a company of hermits in the Highlands of Scotland."

"Sir, if by hermits you mean anchorites or holy hypocrites, I despise them as much as you do; but I was not prepared to witness such excesses in eating and drinking."

"Excesses! that's a very strong expression! I have always been used to keep a full table, and to make my friends welcome to it; people must live according to their station; my style of living is perhaps different from what you have been accustomed to."

"Very different, sir," quickly interrupted the old man; "*my* life, sir, has been a life of labour, of frugality, of abstinence. *Your* life, sir, is one continued, idle, extravagant, intemperate soss."

"Any thing else, sir?" demanded Glenroy, boiling with indignation.

"There *is* something else, sir."

"Then you had better go on, sir; much better say all you have to say; you have already found fault with the company I keep, and the style I live in."

"Sir, you mistake; I find no fault, I only speak my mind."

"Call it what you please, sir; you object to my friends and my table."

"Excuse me again, sir. I object to neither. I have sat at the one, and associated with the other, though they were both highly offensive to me."

"And I can tell you, sir, your behaviour has been no less offensive to me and my friends. By heaven, there is not another man on the face of the earth I would have suffered to stay in my house, and sit at my table for three days without opening his lips. Sir, let me tell you such behaviour is more like that of a spy than any thing else." And Glenroy's passion was now at its height.

"Exactly, sir," said his antagonist, pursing up his mouth with an air of sovereign contempt. "I came to your house not as a babbler and wine-bibber; but as a noter and observer, and I have accomplished my purpose."

By a violent effort Glenroy regained his temper, and, seeing all was at hazard, he resolved to humour the old man, and let him go his way in peace; he therefore said with a laugh, "Well,

well, Inch Orran, you've hardly dealt fairly by us, considering that we were met to celebrate your arrival, and drink to the Laird of Inch Orran. Perhaps we did exceed a little last night; but, since that's all, we shall part good friends, I hope."

"No, sir, it is not all."

"What else offended you, sir? The boys have been rather noisy perhaps; but you know boys will be boys."

"Noisy and disagreeable all boys are," replied Inch Orran; "but epicures and puppies all boys are *not*. Sir, your son is an epicure, and I look upon an epicure as little better than a drunkard. I have known drunkards, sir, that is, men who what you call liked their glass, (degraded as they were to a level with the brutes,) who still retained some manly feelings; but I never knew an epicure who cared for any one thing on the face of the earth, but his own inside."

Glenroy had stood the attack upon himself, his friends, and his table, with wonderful equanimity; but this invective against his son and heir, the very apple of his eye, was too much

for him; and, uttering an oath, he stalked away to the window. But there lay full disclosed the seat of Inch Orran—the family seat!—its venerable towers, its green uplands, its noble woods, all reflected on the bosom of the clear waters.

"There's the respect" that made him pause; and after a severe struggle, he recovered himself, and said, "I'm sorry, Inch Orran, you should have taken up such a prejudice against Norman; for, although I say it, there is not a finer or more manly boy in the country than he is. And as for his eating, if he is a little nice, it's all owing to that English dominie, who, by Jove, beats all for gormandizing that ever I met with. I've a good mind to give him his dismissal this very day."

"As to that, sir, you may take your own time, for it is now too late. Epicurism is a vice that never cures. Your son, sir, is an epicure, and an epicure he will remain, in spite of your teeth."

Here Glenroy could scarcely refrain from seizing the old man by the nape of the neck, and whirling him out at the window, which stood

most invitingly open. While he stood irresolute how to testify his fury and contempt, Inch Orran proceeded:

"Now, sir, I have spoken my mind to you, and I have done it with deliberation. I have spent nearly three days, sir, under your roof, in the midst, I may say, of a human hogsty, for the purpose of studying your son, and the result of my observations is, that he is an epicure. Allow me, sir," as Glenroy was about to interrupt him; "I am aware, sir, that you look forward to your son succeeding to my estate—Sir, I beg I may not be interrupted—the expectation is perfectly natural, and in your situation I should probably have done the same. The wish to regain the inheritance of your forefathers is also unblameable; I find no fault with it."

Glenroy brightened up a little, and began to breathe more easily.

"But, sir, I think it right and proper to undeceive you. Your son will never inherit a foot of my land, or a farthing of my money."

Glenroy was absolutely dumb with rage and astonishment; the old man therefore proceeded:

"But, sir, you have another child, who, although of the wrong sex, promises fair. She is a quiet, inoffensive, temperate creature, which is all that can be expected of a female. My intention, therefore, is, to settle the property upon her and her heirs-male."

"This is a most extraordinary proceeding," cried Glenroy, interrupting him, as he suddenly recovered from the shock he had sustained; "upon my soul, I don't know what I am about. It is a proposal so wholly unexpected, so very unnatural and improper, to pass by the boy for no reason whatever,—I, sir—I can't possibly agree to such a thing."

And he walked hastily up and down in great agitation, while the old man sat looking as demure as a cat. "Sir," continued he, "I don't deprive you of your son, or your son of any thing he has any right to; so neither you nor he have any business to say buff or sty in the matter. My intention, sir, is to mend the breed, which has degenerated, and is still degenerating."

Bursting with half-restrained rage, Glenroy

uttered some unintelligible ejaculations, and allowed his kinsman to go on.

"Sir, the one to mend a degenerate breed is he who speaks the truth, who keeps his word, who honours his parents, who is no gormandizer, who minds neither wind nor weather, and who has been born and bred in wholesome poverty. Such a one is the lad I saw scorned and browbeat at your table; and provided he, Ronald Malcolm, will, at a proper age, consent to take your daughter to wife, and she has sense enough to accede to the proposal, the property shall be settled upon their heirs-male; on the other hand, should he refuse"——

But here an oath burst from Glenroy's lips like a thunderbolt, and the flood-gates of his long-repressed fury were opened—loud and fierce was the torrent that broke loose; but the old man sat and bore it all with the most perfect composure, and even seemed as if he enjoyed the storm he had raised.

At that moment a servant entered to say, that the boat was ready, and the tide answered. Inch Orran rose.

"Time and tide will no man bide, Glenroy. I have now spoken my mind to you, and I shall leave you to deliberate on my proposal."

"I would rather see any daughter of mine in her coffin, than the wife of any beggarly tacksman's son," cried Glenroy, in a perfect foam. "I have other views for my daughter, and I will dispose of her as I think proper."

"Quite right, sir, if you can."

"Sir, I both *can* and *will*."

"You are a lucky man, sir, it seems. I have no more to say."

"Sir, I have something to say to you. This behaviour of yours is not to be borne!"

"That is unfortunate, sir, for I am no duellist. I wish you good morning," was the cool reply; so, disregarding all remonstrance, Inch Orran walked off, and was joined by his lady and Simon.

CHAPTER XV.

Opposition was a thing Glenroy was little accustomed to at any time; but to be thus bearded and got the better of in his own house, in the very heart of his friends, guests, and countrymen, was an indignity he could not away with: for a time he gave full play to his passions, and like a very dragon of old, breathed fire and fury all around. But as what is violent is never lasting, he soon cooled down to his usual temperature, and being of a sanguine disposition, he even began to look upon what had passed as a sort of bad joke, or ill-natured whim of the old man's, which would go no farther, and would not be followed by any bad consequences. The calm, however, was of short duration. The first intelligence he heard was, that Ronald Malcolm had been invited to Inch Orran, and

was actually living there in high favour with his kinsman.

This went so far beyond Glenroy's worst anticipations, that he disdained to be in a passion about it. He was perfectly cool and composed, as every body might see, only his colour was considerably higher than usual; and though he hummed a song, it was much out of tune, and when he laughed very heartily, nobody knew very well what it was at. In short, he had all the gaiety and indifference which people commonly have, when very much agitated and discomposed. It was only by fits and starts that any thing like ill-temper showed itself; but upon his son, as usual, choosing the richest dishes at table, he was, for the first time in his life, checked with an angry exclamation and an oath, followed with, "And I'll be hanged if I'll suffer any epicures in my house. I hate an epicure, and you shall not be an epicure, sir. You shall live upon porridge and mutton, as I did, or, by Jove! you shall starve."

This threat was of course null and void the very next day, when the young Chief was to be seen

as usual, picking his way amongst the intricacies of the luxurious board. But that day had brought new matter to light, which made it unnecessary for Glenroy either to sing out of tune or laugh out of time, or contradict his son, or do any thing out of the common course of nature. It was reported that Ronald Malcolm, so far from having been invited to Inch Orran, had been sent there by his father to try to bring about a reconciliation; that instead of that, he had met with a very bad reception, and been even turned from the house late one stormy night when he had lost himself amongst the hills, and had been glad to take refuge in the shieling of Duncan Macrae, the hind on Benvalloch, from whom the deponent had his information.

Glenroy was not a malignant man, but different passions often lead to the same result. He was a proud and a selfish man; but his pride was called family-pride, and his selfishness, natural affection; and both these much-admired qualities operated precisely as envy and malice would have done.

His pride had been galled, and his self-love wounded, at the thoughts of his poor despised kinsman's son being preferred to his; and now his heart unconsciously exulted in the downfall of his hopes, and he felt ready to patronise and befriend him in any way, except that of becoming laird of Inch Orran. Flushed with his own generous feelings, he resolved to pay a visit to the family at Lochdhu, and offer him his advice and assistance in the disposal of Ronald. Perhaps a little curiosity to hear a true account of Ronald's visit to Inch Orran, mingled with the motives, for he had heard so many various statements as to what had passed between the old man and his young kinsman, that he was at a loss what to believe. In one particular, however, they all agreed, and that was the main point, that a violent quarrel had taken place; but whether Ronald had left the house in dudgeon, or been turned from it in disgrace, had not been clearly ascertained. Whichever it was, it mattered little to Glenroy, the result would be the same, and the restoration of his son would follow, as a matter of course; he therefore flattered himself that it

was simply the desire to arrive at the truth which lay at the bottom of his curiosity. Accordingly, one fine summer's day, he set forth on his ride.

Lochdhu was as ugly as any Highland place *can* be; but there was a wild grandeur in its dark mountains, and roaring streams, and trackless heaths, and a varying interest in the lights and shadows of its stormy frith, which atoned for the want of more florid beauties. There was perfect neatness, and even some embellishment, around the house; but the shrubs were yet in their infancy, and the flowers were not so luxuriant as in brighter climes, and beneath more costly culture.

As the Chief drew near, he descried Captain and Mrs Malcolm, with their children, on the little lawn before the house, which was strewn with coils of new-mown hay. Mrs Malcolm, though no longer young, still bore a fair and youthful aspect, and seemed like the elder sister of the sweet Madonna-looking girl, the senior of the family, who sat by her side. Captain Malcolm had been a very handsome man, but the hardships of war and varieties of climate, had

impaired his looks as well as health. What he had been, was now pictured in young Ronald—

> " By his ingenuous beauty, by the gleam
> Of his fair eyes, by his capacious brow,
> By all the graces with which nature's hand
> Had bounteously array'd him."

The younger children looked healthful and bright as opening buds and blossoms.

Mrs Malcolm and her daughters were seated with a book and their work. Captain Malcolm and the bigger boys were turning over the hay, and the little ones were frolicking about.

But Glenroy saw no beauty in this family picture on which his eye could long dwell; for he despised women, and never was amused with any children but his own. The first brief salutations over, he therefore walked apart with his host, expatiating upon hay-mowing, making, stacking, &c. and describing the magnificent manner in which these operations were performed on his model of a farm. He then entered upon the subject uppermost in his mind, by enquiring of Captain Malcolm if he had seen Inch Orran since his arrival in the country. A simple negative was all the reply.

"Your son would tell you he had met him at my house," said Glenroy, with some hesitation.

"Ronald was then ignorant who he was; but I suspect he was indebted to your good offices upon that occasion."

Glenroy coloured, and stammered out something in the way of denial.

"I am very sensible of your kind intentions," said Captain Malcolm, "although——"

"Not at all, not at all," interrupted Glenroy, hurriedly. "I did not—that is to say, I—I—"

"You did all you could, I believe, Glenroy," said his kinsman; "but all would not do."

"I assure you—you give me more credit—than I am at all—entitled to," said the Chieftain, in increasing confusion.

"No, no," cried Captain Malcolm. "The fact speaks for itself; it could only have been to your friendly offices Ronald owed his invitation, for no sooner had Inch Orran returned from his visit to you, than he sent for him to his house."

"And he went of course?" enquired Glenroy, eager to pass over any more undue compliments.

"Yes, he did; his mother and I saw no rea-

son against it; on the contrary, we were both in hopes it might lead the way to a reconciliation, and I trust we were actuated by something better than mere worldly motives in wishing it, though, no doubt, these had their influence too; but whether as Christians or as mere self-interested parents, we certainly did most earnestly desire it: it has, however, been otherwise appointed, and we are satisfied."

"It was reported," said Glenroy, "that your son had been taken into high favour; was there then no foundation for that?"

"He was well received and kindly treated," said Captain Malcolm; "but——"

"But it didn't last?" cried Glenroy, with something of triumph in his tone; "I could have told him that, for between ourselves, the man's as mad as a March hare. But how came Ronald to quarrel with him, for at one time he seemed to have got into his good graces?"

"Thanks to you for that, Glenroy," said Captain Malcolm, "and he might perhaps have been there still if he had not preferred his parents to a fortune. It was such a strange unnatural pro-

posal the old man made him, that I can only account for it on the plea of insanity: he kept Ronald for three days, showed him all his property, told him of all his wealth, and then offered to adopt him, to make him his heir, and settle his whole fortune upon him, on condition of his renouncing all intercourse with his own family!"

"Ay, that's just of a piece with his threatening to disinherit Norman, for asking for the back of a moorfowl one day at dinner—the man's certainly mad!—And what did your son say to that?"

"Few boys, I believe, would have been base and sordid enough to have yielded to the temptation, but some of them might have listened to it more calmly; instead of which Ronald, whose temper and feelings are warm, was so indignant that he instantly left the house, and set out to walk twenty miles in a dark stormy night."

"He should have come to me," cried Glenroy, warmly; "my house was all in the way, and I would have made him welcome at any hour of the night: for, I assure you, I approve highly

of his behaviour; he did just what he ought to have done; it gives me a very good opinion of your son, it does indeed, *very* good!"

This was uttered with great emphasis, and as if his encomium would be the making of Ronald's fortune.

"We have indeed reason to thank God that he is deserving of our affection," said Captain Malcolm, with emotion.

"Yes, he seems really a promising boy, and he acted in that matter just as he ought to have done; to be sure, it would have been very bad if he had done otherwise.—And, by the by, what are you going to make of him? Is it not full time you were thinking of that?"

"I have had many an anxious thought on that subject," said Captain Malcolm, with a sigh.

"Aye, to be sure, it's no joke setting out a lad in the world, now every profession is so overstocked; but it's time Ronald should learn something."

"I trust he has learnt something, and is every day learning more," said his father.

"O, I have no doubt you have done all you could for him," said the Chief, slightingly; "but we all know there are few gentlemen fit to educate their sons."

"Yet I believe it is from their parents that children receive by far the most important part of their education,"* replied Captain Malcolm.

"The deuce you do! then I for one can assure you, I take no sort of charge of my son's education. I pay four hundred a-year, which I think a pretty fair allowance for a dominie, and I should think it rather hard after that if I was expected to educate him myself!"

Captain Malcolm smiled, perhaps at the ostentation with which this was uttered, then replied, "Yet his habits and opinions will be much more influenced by you than by his tutor, and these are what I consider as the most important parts of education."

"Do you so? then education must be a very easy matter with you it seems; if that were all,

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* See Mrs Barbauld's admirable Essay on Education.

I might have saved my four hundred a-year—Habits and opinions ! I really never happened to hear of boys' habits and opinions. I should like to know what sort of things *their* habits and opinions are !"

Captain Malcolm was quite accustomed to hear his Chief talk "high nonsense," loud, arrogant, overbearing nonsense, the most insufferable of all the varieties of nonsense, and he had the merit of always answering him as calmly as though he had been conversing with Plato himself.

"The actions of each day and hour are what form the habits," he replied, "and the taste and affections are what influence the opinions; both combined, are what insensibly form the character. Ronald is deficient in many things, but I trust he has imbibed good principles. I am sure he possesses kindly affections; he is not wanting in solid learning, and his habits are those of a hardy Highland boy, who minds neither wind nor weather, hunger nor thirst, and who can climb the rock, swim the water, and sleep among the heather."

"My good sir, any herd's son in the country can do all that," said Glenroy, contemptuously: "But that's nothing to the purpose; we were talking of your son's education, which is quite a different thing. There's my own boy! although I say it, I don't believe there's a boy in the kingdom farther advanced in his education than he is."

"Those who can afford to purchase instruction for their children are in the right to do it," said Captain Malcolm, mildly; "for a liberal education is a great advantage; but those who cannot, ought to be satisfied with giving their children a virtuous and a useful one. You and I, Glenroy, are differently circumstanced; wealth educates your son, but poverty must train mine, and the best education a poor man can give his son, is to make him know and feel betimes that he *is* the son of a poor man."

"That's all very true," said Glenroy; "but what are you to make of him? What would you think of making a preacher of him? I could be of some use to you there; I have a good deal of

patronage of my own, as well as something to say in other quarters."

"I thank you, but Ronald's bent does not lie that way, and no motive of worldly interest will ever prompt me to urge any son of mine to enter on so sacred a vocation. Ronald has decided for the sea."

"A very good sensible choice," cried the Chief, "just the very thing for him, and the sooner he goes the better; 'learn young learn fair,' is, you know, a good old saying."

"He will go, I expect, next year," said Captain Malcolm. "A cousin of his mother's, Captain Stanley, a worthy man, and gallant officer, has offered Ronald a birth in his ship."

"Ah! that's very well, but you ought to send him in the meantime to a public school; it's a great advantage for a boy who has his way to push in the world, to have had some training before he begins, and he'll learn more of the world in one year at a great public school than he will do all his life at home."

"I am no friend to a premature knowledge of the world; it comes soon enough to most of

us. I greatly prefer the safety which results from good principles and virtuous habits, to that purchased by an early knowledge of vice."

"Most of our great men, however, have been educated at public schools," continued Glenroy.

"That is an opinion which has been completely refuted,"* said Captain Malcolm; "and even were it otherwise, I should prefer having my son a good man, rather than a great one."

"O ay, that's fine romantic talking," said Glenroy, contemptuously, "but it's a great deal too fine for me; I have no notion of your romantic schemes."

"Then we are agreed," said Captain Malcolm, with a smile, "for I too, think the plainer and simpler the system of education, especially for the children of a poor man, so much the better; however, I thank you from my heart for the interest you take in Ronald; if you knew him better, I flatter myself you would not find him so deficient as you suppose. He has his faults,

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* See Edinburgh Review.

but he has many a hard lesson yet to learn before the system of moral discipline will be completed. I trust God will order all for the best, and when the time comes, to His care I will with confidence commit his future destiny."

"Well, I hope it may answer, for Ronald's a good boy, and I shall always be ready to assist him;" and with a shake of the hand to his kinsman, and a hurried adieu to the rest of the family, Glenroy returned home, satisfied that he had nothing to fear from Ronald's rivalship.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE good-natured Laird's recommendation of Lucy Malcolm had not been thrown away upon Mr M'Dow, and from that time he had been very frequent in his visits at Lochdhu, much more so indeed than was at all agreeable to any member of the family, for between his mind and theirs there was a gulf which seemed impassable. But, never dreaming that he could presume to cast his eyes upon their fair sweet Lucy, the parents ascribed his frequent visitations to better motives, and flattered themselves, that faintly as their own light shone, it might yet prove the means of enlightening the still more darkened steps of Mr M'Dow. He seemed to them to be kind-hearted, and well-meaning in his own coarse way; at least so Captain and Mrs Malcolm construed the many attentions he was now in the

habit of paying them, together with the softened tone of his conversation at times, and the anxiety he evinced to make himself useful and agreeable to the young people. At one time he would amble over on the back of Amailye, his huge pockets filled to the brim with nuts from his own premises, "most uncommonly sweet and deleechuz," which he would take out in large handfuls, and deposit on the ladies' work-table; another time he would arrive, laden on each side with apples from his garden, "uncommonly high-flavoured and jisey;" on another occasion he appeared with a basketful of small fresh-water trouts, which he had caught himself, and which he said would be "most uncommon delicate picking," but he hoped Miss Lucy would take care of the bones. But the consummation of all was, when he entered with his shooting-bag over his shoulder, containing a brace of "most beautiful young termagants,"* trophies of his prowess on the moors. It often fell to Lucy's lot to

* Ptarmigans.

receive these testimonies of the minister's good-will, which she did with her usual sweetness of manner; and though few things could be more offensive to her than the company of Mr M'Dow, she yet behaved towards him with that polite endurance, which, to one of his gross ken, was equal to the most flattering encouragement.

"There are some uncommon fine prospects about the manse, Miss Lucy," said he, as he found her one day sketching the view from the parlour window; "I think you would make a fine hand of them."

"The views in your neighbourhood are, indeed, very beautiful," said Lucy; "and I have long wished to take a few sketches there, if it were not too presumptuous in me to attempt it."

"Oh, Miss Lucy!" exclaimed Mr M'Dow, "how can you say that? But I'm really happy that you admire the situation of the manse."

"Every body must admire it," said Lucy; "it is quite charming."

"I'm delighted to hear you think so," cried Mr M'Dow; "for it's rather a remote, secluded situation, though, to be sure, the prospect's much

more animated than it was, now that the steamboat comes our way regularly twice a-week, and touches at the village, which is not above a gunshot from the manse. She's an amazing convenience, besides making a most interesting object in the view; for instance, I get my tea and sugar brought to my very door by her for a mere trifle. I can even get a loaf of bread from Glasgow within four-and-twenty hours after it's out of the oven, for a penny or so additional, which is no consideration to *me*, in comparison of the comfort of the thing—it's uncommon fine bread too."

A pause ensued, for the minister's communications called for no reply; and Lucy busied herself with her drawing. Mr M'Dow resumed.

"Eh, Miss Lucy, if I might but hope for the honour of seeing you at the manse some day, you would really make me very proud."

"I should be sorry if a visit from me were to have that effect," said Lucy, smiling; "but certainly I shall be very happy, some day when papa and I are taking a ride, to bring my sketch-

book to Auchterbruckle, and carry off, if I can, some of its beauties."

Before the minister had time to utter his raptures, Captain Malcolm entered the room; and, after the usual preliminaries, Mr M'Dow began. "I have just been admiring Miss Lucy's painting," pointing to her pencil-sketch; "I'm no great *connyshure*, indeed; but it strikes me as being uncommonly well executed!"

"And, in return, I have been praising Mr M'Dow's fine views, papa," said she; "and have even been bold enough to talk of attempting to sketch some of them."

"I assure you, sir, I am very much flattered with Miss Lucy's approbation of my prospects; and I was just requesting, as a most particular favour, that she would do me the honour some day to come over with you, and take a look of my premises. There's not much to be seen, to be sure, just now about the manse; but the prospects all round are much admired, and when I get my decreet, things will be made more decent about the doors than they are at present."

"You little know what you are about, when

you invite such a noted sketcher as Lucy to visit you," said Captain Malcolm, with a smile; "she is such an enthusiast, and you have so great a variety of fine views in your neighbourhood, that, I warn you, you will find it difficult to get rid of her again."

"I'll take my chance of that, Captain," with a prodigious roar of delight; "I'll take my chance of that; and now, Captain, will you not just do me the favour to fix a day when Miss Lucy and you will ride over, and take a look of my premises?"

"We had better take our chance of a fine day," said Lucy, who privately thought the minister's absence was not the worst that could befall them.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Lucy; but really the disappointment would be dreadful, if I was to miss the honour of a visit from the Captain and you—perfectly dreadful! And it *might* happen, for I have occasion to be a good deal from home; in fact, I consider it as a principal part of my duty to visit a good deal, and to be on the best footing with the heritors of my parish. It's

a discreditable thing when the minister and the gentry are no just at one; and wherever I have been, I have always made a point of keeping the very best company."

"A clergyman, who faithfully discharges his duty, must see great varieties of company," said Captain Malcolm; "and ought neither to consider himself as elevated by the notice of the higher orders, or debased by mingling occasionally with the lowest and poorest of his flock."

"There I perfectly agree with you, Captain," replied Mr M'Dow, with much hearty warmth; "these are precisely my own sentiments on the subject. From the honourable nature of my office, I have always looked upon myself as upon a footing—if not rather *shoopayreor* to gentlemen of larger fortune, and who may, perhaps, make a greater dash in the world than I do; and, on the other hand, I never refuse, when properly called upon, to attend to the poorest man or woman in the parish."

This was uttered with a modest air of self-

approbation, and concluded with a long self-complacent pinch of snuff.

"There is, indeed, a reverence due to the clergy as a body," said Captain Malcolm; "and in a Christian country they are always sure of meeting with it; but that is a feeling which operates very slightly upon the minds of the community; and, unless ministers can claim *individually* the respect due to superior piety and excellence, I fear collectively it is of little avail."

"You're perfectly right, Captain. I agree with you entirely. Every clergyman is called upon to keep up the dignity of his station, and to cut a respectable figure in the world. It doesn't do for a man to let himself down too much."

"In my opinion, a clergyman, who is in the way of his duty, never can let himself down," said Captain Malcolm; "for he must be endeavouring to raise the minds of those around him to the highest standard of moral excellence."

"That's really not an easy matter, Captain," said Mr M'Dow; "for the common people are

a bad set. But here comes Mrs Malcolm; I hope I'll get her on my side to fix a day for the visit to the manse."

And herewith Mrs Malcolm was assailed with entreaties to use her influence for that purpose, or, as the minister elegantly expressed it, "just to nail the business at once." Mrs Malcolm was pleased at the thought of a little excursion for Lucy; so she seconded the minister's proposal, and, to his great delight, a day was fixed when Captain Malcolm and his daughter were to pay a morning visit at the manse of Auchterbruckle.

CHAPTER XVII.

GLENROY'S anger against Inch Orran had much abated, since he had ascertained what he called "the defeat of the Donald Begs."

"After all, Inch Orran is not a bad body," he would say to Benbowie; "he knows what he's about, and will not be easily taken in, or I'm much mistaken. I begin to think I was rather short with him when he was here, though the wretch was most confoundedly provoking too! But he's an old man, and a particular man, and he has such an idiot of a wife! I really believe, after all, he meant nothing."

"On my conscience, I believe so," responded Benbowie. "Nothing—nothing—nothing at all."

Still this nothing had left an awkwardness, which Glenroy did not know very well how to get over. Something ought to be done to prove

there was nothing; but what that something was he could not tell. After what had passed, he could not possibly renew the overtures in person; still less could he send Benbowie as his ambassador. Had Inch Orran been like any body else, he might have felt his pulse with a haunch of venison; but that most likely would only lead to fresh hostilities; so difficult is it to manage people who have no weak side, or rather no favourite sense to gratify.

Inch Orran had a weak side, indeed, but that was rather his strong point; for the love of money was his prevailing passion; and, of all besetting sins, that is perhaps the most difficult to gratify. Harpagon, to be sure, had his Frosine; but in general the difficulty of administering to the pure love of gold must be greater than that of pampering any other evil propensity.

Glenroy was, however, relieved from his embarrassment, by receiving the following dispatch from his kinsman.

"Mr Mungo Malcolm, of Inch Orran, presents compliments to Mr Norman Malcolm, of Glenroy, and requests the favour of his company,

and that of his friend, Mr Lachlan Malcolm, of Benbowie, at his house, on the afternoon of Wednesday the 24th instant, to remain till the forenoon of Saturday the 27th instant. Mr M. Malcolm begs to intimate, that he can also accommodate Mr N. Malcolm's body servant."

An invitation to Inch Orran was what Glenroy had not looked for; and though the manner in which it was couched was highly offensive, yet that was passed over with a slight oath or two. The visit itself, indeed, would be an act of the severest penance, both to mind and body. Ill-humour, impertinence, and starvation, to be endured for three days—even Glenroy's stout heart quailed to think of! But to refuse, would be at once to renounce all hopes and expectations. It was a golden opportunity for bringing matters to the point. It was evident Inch Orran was making up in his own way. It would be madness to refuse to meet him—go he must, even in the face of the blade-bone of mutton! Benbowie at first made a faint resistance, as even his dull fancy pictured to itself the "flesh-pots" of Glenroy, in mournful contrast with the bare

bones of Inch Orran; but he was so little in the habit of opposing his Chief, that he soon succumbed. So, after much consideration, the following answer was dispatched:—

"Glenroy returns kind compliments to Inch Orran, and assures him he will allow no engagements to stand in the way of his accepting his friendly invitation for Wednesday the 24th; and will, if possible, make such arrangements as may enable him to remain till the 27th with his worthy kinsman. Benbowie begs his best respects, and will do himself the honour of waiting upon Inch Orran, at the same time."

"Well, for my part," said Mrs Macauley, when she heard the invitation discussed, "I cannot say I like it. Three people invited, and for three days. There's something—I cannot tell what—in such an invitation!"

"You are a complete goose, Molly Macauley, and if you had just as much sense as would stick on the point of one of your own needles, you never would open your mouth," was the Chief's courteous reply.

"Well, Glenroy, you know it is not so much

sense that I set up for having, as just a sort of a something else, I cannot tell what it is, that makes me see things that people a great deal wiser and sensibler than I am, do not see."

"You pretend to the second-sight, do you?"

"O, no, 'deed I am not so favoured as that; but, if you would be guided by me, Glenroy, you would not go to that cankered body's house."

"I suppose you think there will be a boar's-head served up, as a signal to dispatch Benbowie and me, with knives, and perhaps forks?"

"No, Glenroy, I have more sense than to think that Inch Orran would behave in such a way as that; but I don't like people being so perjink in paying back their entertainments. You see there was himself, and his wife, and Simon, his servant, all came here on a Wednesday afternoon, and staid till the Saturday forenoon; and then he asks you and Benbowie, and your servant, just to do the same thing; and is not that saying, I'll give you neither less nor more than what you gave me?"

"O, you're a soothsayer—a diviner, are you?

You can tell what's passing in people's minds! But I would advise you, Mrs Mary Macauley, to stick to your needles and thread; for you know no more of mankind than one of your own worsted monsters."

"Well, well, Glenroy, I know you're a great deal wiser than me; but we'll see who's right, for all that."

Wednesday the 24th arrived, and looked most auspicious. The Chief and his friend having made a hearty luncheon, and sighed to think it was the last plentiful meal they should behold for three days, embarked with a favourable gale, and were in due time safely landed at Inch Orran.

If Glenroy had any misgivings in his own mind as to the sincerity of the reconciliation, they were soon dispelled by the courteous reception he met with. No symptom of displeasure appeared either in the looks or manners of his host; on the contrary, he was studiously polite, and even accosted him with a smile, or something intended for such, though of so suspicious a character, that it would have made any one else

instinctively bethink them of the canny old Scottish motto,—" Touch not the cat but a glove." However, Glenroy was not the man to be daunted by a smile, so he returned it in full measure, and a most cordial greeting took place. Inch Orran even enquired, in a mild and courteous manner, after the health of young Norman, which Glenroy considered as the next thing to declaring him his heir.

" I have had three gentlemen residing with me for some days," said Inch Orran, addressing the Chief, " whom it was my wish that you should see here. One is my law-agent, or man of business, Mr Meldrum; another is my factor, Mr M'Farlane; and the third is Mr Crowfoot, an eminent land-surveyor. Their business with me has been of an important nature, and has proved highly satisfactory in its results. It was concluded this morning; but the gentlemen remain with me till to-morrow, in order to celebrate the termination of our labours, and also to afford you, sir, an opportunity of acquiring any information you think proper on the subject."

This went far beyond Glenroy's most san-

guine anticipations. In fact, what did all this amount to, but that having had his estates valued, his rent-roll proved, and his settlement made, he now took this method of declaring him his heir. In common delicacy, therefore, he could do no less than wave all appearance of curiosity or interference on the subject, which he did, but in a manner that plainly showed what was passing in his mind. At this Inch Orran's mouth was curled up in a most suspicious manner; and one better acquainted with the character of the man, would have felt rather distrustful of this supernatural sweetness and openness, after what had passed; and to those who knew him, this "faire seemlie pleasaunce" would have been any thing but an "augur of good purpose." It was one of Inch Orran's peculiarities, that whenever his mind had settled into a fixed hatred or contempt for an individual, from that time his manner towards him was marked by the most scrupulous attention to the ordinary rules of politeness; not with any design to deceive, for he despised all duplicity and double-dealing, but from a certain malignant delight, akin to that with

which a cat gently strokes the victim she is preparing to immolate.

But Glenroy was too superficial himself, to be at all aware of the depths profound of others. He could not see beneath the surface, and when that was smooth, he judged all was sound; he therefore drew the most flattering conclusions from his kinsman's behaviour, and without pretending to the second-sight, he already beheld, by anticipation, the long-coveted property in his possession—the family honours again fixed in the family seat, and a clear five thousand per annum added to his rent-roll. They were now joined by the men of business, who were each introduced with marked emphasis to Glenroy. Next followed Mrs Malcolm, "in outward show elaborate," and as sensible and edifying as usual. The dinner hour arrived, and, to the agreeable surprise of Glenroy and his friends, they sat down to a most plentiful and excellent repast, such as would not have disgraced even the Chief's own board, while wines of the best quality were liberally dispensed. The most perfect good-humour prevailed. Glen-

roy's gasconades passed without comment; and even Mrs Malcolm's *sottises* escaped with impunity.

The agent and factor were silent, iron-bound looking persons; but Mr Crowfoot, the surveyor, whose more active habits had probably given a greater freedom to his tongue, discoursed largely upon the survey he had made of Inch Orran, its pertinents and pendicles, the prodigious rise in the rent when the leases should fall, which would happen in a year or two; then, if there should prove to be a seam of coal, of which Mr Crowfoot was very sanguine, there was no saying what might be the value of the property; and so on.

"Whatever the value may prove," said Inch Orran, mildly, "one thing is certain, sir, that it will prove of more benefit to my heir than ever it can to me."

Glenroy's face flushed with the consciousness that he was the man; and he expected the next thing would be the proclaiming of him; but though he could have decreed, and even assisted at the apotheosis of Inch Orran, he was not prepared

to make a speech upon the occasion; for, fond as he was of talking, he was not gifted with eloquence. He, however, showed by his manner that he took the hint to himself—his spirits rose —Inch Orran's smiles redoubled; and, strange to say, the day passed pleasantly, and the evening closed peacefully!

CHAPTER XVIII.

ACCORDING to Mrs Macauley's theory, things looked still worse the following day, when there arrived in rapid succession, the self-same party who had been convened by Glenroy, when he did the honours of his house to Inch Orran. There were lairds of every description—good-natured and ill-natured, fat and lean, tall and short, red and blue, rich and poor, some with wives, and some without. Nor was Mr M'Dow wanting, though he protested that nothing but respect for his worthy heritors would have brought him there that day, as he had just received the melancholy accounts of the death of his sister Mrs Dr M'Fee's youngest child, a most uncommon stout infant, named, after himself, M'Dow M'Fee. It had died of the cutting of a back tooth very suddenly; a severe stroke upon his

poor sister and the worthy doctor. Under these circumstances, Mr M'Dow thought proper to be rather in a pensive mood, though, as he owned to a touch of the rheumatism "up one side" of his head, and testified an immense swelled jaw, it was at least doubtful whether his spirits were most affected by his own cheek, or the catastrophe of little M'Dow M'Fee.

So it was, he was less obnoxious than usual, and uttered no *bong motes* worthy of being recorded. If Glenroy had been surprised with the dinner the preceding day, he was confounded at the banquet, round which the company were assembled. It had evidently been got up by an artist of the first eminence. The *sough* went round the table that Inch Orran had brought a cook all the way from Glasgow—Edinburgh—London—Paris, to dress the dinner. Be that as it may, the dinner was evidently dressed by no mean hand, and all testified the work of man, and not of woman. Certainly not Mrs Malcolm's, who, between her own finery and that of the dinner, seemed quite bewildered, and, like Mr M'Dow, was more silent than usual. Such

of the party as could not be accommodated within the walls of Inch Orran, found lodgings, some at the factor's, some at the Clachan, and some in the hay-loft; but all returned to the charge the following day, like giants refreshed. Even Mr M'Dow's cheek had fallen, and Mrs Malcolm's tongue was unloosed.

Every body who has made one of a party in a large house in the country, must have observed how great a portion of time is consumed in what is politely called the pleasures of the table; and upon this occasion the prevailing practice was duly observed. The host, indeed, continued his own abstemious mode as usual; but he begged his rules might be no restraint upon the company, and that they would, in all things pertaining to good cheer, take their Chief as their example.

The intervals between the meals were filled up in the usual manner, by sauntering out of doors, walking up and down the rooms, playing at billiards, reading newspapers, discussing politics, canvassing county meetings, &c.

"Here's a most entertaining game," said Mrs

Malcolm, drawing forth a large sheet of pasteboard, on which was displayed the royal game of the goose; "it's a thing I brought with me in my trunk; for I thought it would be a fine amusement for Mr Malcolm and me in the country, when we had nothing to do; but I can't get him to play at it, if I would do ever so."

"Most men find it enough to have played the fool with a wife, without having to play the goose with her next," said Inch Orran, with one of his bitter smiles.

A burst of laughter from the unmarried part of the company testified their approbation of this sentiment.

"That's really very severe, Inch Orran," said Mr M'Dow, coming forward as the champion of the ladies; "very severe, indeed, upon the fair sex, and I'm sure most extremely misapplied in your own case, with such a lady as yours," bowing to Mrs Malcolm, who sat quite unmoved with her goose spread out before her.

"A man may learn a useful lesson even from a goose, sir, if he can take a hint in time," said Inch Orran sarcastically.

"A well and a prison are pretty broad hints, to be sure," said Mr M'Dow, surveying the detail of the goose; "but I hope there's nobody here that will ever have oeeasion to take such hints; for my own part, I don't think I'm in any danger either of the one or the other, even if my deereet should go against me—hoeh, hoeh, hoeh, ho!"

"These, sir, are emblematie, I presume, of Truth and Reflection," said Ineh Orran; "the one is said to lie in the bottom of a well, and the other, I believe, is often found at last within the bars of a prison. I know few men who may not profit by sueh hints;" and a small fiery spark shot from the eorner of his eye at Glenroy, on whom it fell harmless, so intrenehed was he in the firm belief that all was doing and saying in honour of himself. Not Haman, when he seemed to be at the pinnacle of his wishes, felt more secure than Glenroy.

The third day arrived which was to wind up the Inch Orran festivities, and nothing remained but that the guests should now take their departure. The usual stir had begun amongst them,

as their several conveyances were successively announced.

"I assure you, Inch Orran," wheezed a fat laird, who was the first to move, "I am sorry to be the first to break up this party; for I can with truth declare, I never, in the whole course of my life, spent two pleasanter days; and I am sure I speak the sentiments of the whole party when I say so."

"I believe you, sir," replied Inch Orran, with one of his little horrible smiles; "but the credit of these revellings is due to our Chief. Had it not been for him, I should have entertained you in a different style; but he has given me a lesson, which I hope I shall not soon forget; and I have only been discharging the debt I had incurred to him, by his splendid hospitalities towards me."

Glenroy was not prepared for this eulogium, and his face glowed, and his whole person distended with the proud triumph of having the meed of praise thus publicly awarded to him; but while he was preparing a suitable reply, Mr

M'Dow, as usual, broke forth with a tremendous hach, hach, ho!

"Well, Inch Orran, for my part, I can only say, that I hope from my heart this innocent rivalship between my two worthy pawtrons may long continue to subsist; and I dare say I may answer for all present as I do for myself, that, like the Swiss troops, we shall always be ready to lend our assistance to either side, and serve both to the best of our power for the time being—hoch, hoch, hoch, hoch, ho!"

A clamour of mirth succeeded, which drowned Inch Orran's reply, as, with one of his bitterest looks, he said, "Sir, your services are not likely to be required by me in a hurry." Then, as the roar still continued, he muttered, "I would at any time rather sit down to table with two devils than with twenty angels."

The guests had severally departed—all save Glenroy, who still lingered in hopes that Inch Orran would now come to the point, and disclose the deeds that had been done; but Inch Orran's lips seemed now as if hermetically sealed, and he heard all Glenroy's hints and innuen-

does in profound silence. At length the Chief saw it was time to take leave; and as he did so, he expressed a hope of soon seeing his kind host at his house.

"Never, sir!" was the reply, with a look and an emphasis that made even Benbowie start.

The Chief was confounded; but he was now outside the door, which was already closed upon him.

"He is a very particular man," said Glenroy.

"On my conscience, it would not do for every body to be so particular," said Benbowie.

"It's just his manner," said Glenroy; "I'm convinced he means nothing."

And his echo answered, "Nothing."

CHAPTER XIX.

The day arrived for the long-promised visit to the Manse, and a most propitious one it was, worthy of the lovely scenes on which it smiled. The father and daughter set out early on their excursion, and after a ride of about five miles found themselves in the environs of the Manse. These were of the grandest and most romantic description; there were lofty heath-covered mountains, softened by gently swelling green hills, diversified and enriched by patches of natural copsewood, which completely supplied the place of trees; here and there were openings to the bold rocky shore, with its grey cliffs and broken fragments mingling in peaceful amity with the dark blue waters that curled around them. Far as the eye could reach the sea was studded with isles and islets, some gleaming

through misty showers, some glancing in the full blaze of sunshine. In short, nothing could be more varied, animated, and picturesque, yet beautifully tranquil and secluded, than the scenes which presented themselves, at every step seen under different aspects. Lucy was enchanted, but the enchantment fled on approaching the Manse. It was a thin tenement, built of rough grey stone of the usual pattern, a window on each side of the door, and three above. At one side was the garden, with cabbages and marigolds growing pell-mell, and in the rear was the set of condemned offices, partly thatched and partly slated. There were no attempts at neatness in the approach to the house, which was merely a rough jog-trot road, flanked on each side by a dyke. Presently Mr M'Dow was seen hurrying to the door to meet his guests, and there, as they alighted, he was ready to receive them with open hands.

Great was the joy expressed at this honour, as Mr M'Dow led the way to the interior of his mansion, which was just such as might have been expected from its outward aspect. There was a

narrow stone passage, with a door on each side, and there was a perpendicular wooden stair, and that was all that was to be seen at the first *coup d'œil.* But if little was revealed to the eye, the secrets of the house were yielded with less coy reserve to the other senses; for there was to be heard the sound of a jack, now beginning with that low slow mournful whine, which jacks of sensibility are sure to have; then gradually rising to a louder and more grating pitch, till at length one mighty crash, succeeded, as all mighty crashes are, by a momentary silence. Then comes the winding up, which, contrary to all the rules of the drama, is, in fact, only a new beginning, and so on, *ad infinitum*, till the deed is done. With all these progressive sounds was mingled the sharp, shrill, loud voice and Gaelic accents of the *chef de cuisine*, with an occasional clash or clang, at least equal to the fall of the armour in the Castle of Otranto.

Then there issued forth with resistless might a smell which defied all human control, and to which doors and windows were but feeble barriers or outlets; till, like the smoke in the Ara-

bian Nights, which resolved itself into a genie, it seemed as if about to quit its aerial form, and assume a living and tangible substance.

Lucy would fain have drawn back as she crossed the threshold, and, quitting the pure precincts of sunshine and fresh air, found herself in the power of this unseen monster—this compound of fish, fat, peats, burnt grease, kail, leeks, and onions, revelling too amid such scenes, and beneath such a sky!

"You see I have brought my sketch-book, Mr M'Dow," said she, "so I must make the most of my time, and be busy out of doors."

"You'll have plenty of time for that, Miss Lucy; it's early in the day yet, you've had a long ride, and you'll be the better of a little refreshment; pray sit down, and do me the favour to take a mouthful of something;" and he handed a plateful of short-bread, which, with a bottle of wine, stood ready stationed on a side-table. "You'll find it uncommonly good, Miss Lucy, it comes all the way from Glasgow; it's made by my mother, now in the 78th year of her age; she sends me always a bun, and half a

peck of short-bread for my *hogmanay*, and it's surprising how it keeps. This is the last farl of it, but it's just as good as the first was!" helping himself to a piece, which would have qualified any body else for six weeks of Cheltenham. "And, by the by, that's a picture of my mother, taken when she was a younger woman than she is now," pointing to an abominable daub of a large, vulgar, flushed-looking, elderly woman, sitting on a garden chair, with a willow at her back, her hands crossed before her, and a large hair ring on her fore-finger. "That's reckoned a strong likeness of my mother; she was an uncommon fine woman when in her prime; she measured five feet ten and three quarters on her stocking soles, which is a remarkable heighth for a woman, and she carried the breadth along with it; yet she was the smallest of six daughters. It's told of her fawther, Mr M'Tavish, (who was a man of great humour,) that he used to say he had six-and-thirty foot of daughters—hoch, hoch, ho!—it was very good! very good!" Here Mr M'Dow indulged in another fit of laughter, while his guests turned their eyes to

another picture, but it was no less obnoxious to the sight. "That again is my fawther, and a most capital picture! there's a great deal of dignity there! for though extremely affable, he could assume a great deal of dignity when it was necessary."

This dignitary was a mean, consequential-looking body, with lowering brows and a bob-wig, seated in an arm-chair, with a flaming Virgil, pourtrayed in red morocco and gold, in his hand.

"I am no *connyshure* myself, but they strike me as being very good pictures; and I can vouch for their being most capital likenesses." Neither Captain Malcolm nor Lucy could violate sincerity so far as to bestow a single commendation on the pictures; so Mr M'Dow went on—"That book which you see in my fawther's hand, was a present made to him by his scholars when he was master of the Myreside School. I confess I look at it with great pride, as a most flattering testimony of the honourable and——" Here a prodigious crash from the kitchen, followed by very loud and angry vociferations,

arrested Mr M'Dow's harangue; and, opening the door, he called, in a very high authoritative tone,—"What's the meaning of this noise?" Upon which the tumult ceased. "Make less noise there, and keep the kitchen door shut!" A violent slam of the door was the only answer returned. "I understand it's all the fashion now in great houses, to have the kitchen as near the dining-room as possible," said Mr M'Dow, wishing to throw an air of gentility over his *ménage*. "But, for my own part, I must confess I would prefer it at a little distance, for it's impossible, do what you will, to get servants to be quiet; and it's really not pleasant, when I have a friend or two with me, and we are just wishing to enjoy ourselves, to be disturbed as we were just now. What I want in my addition is this—I would turn my present kitchen into my drawing-room, or study, just as it shuted, for there's an exceeding good light scullery off it, which I could make my own closet, and keep my books and papers in. The kitchen I would throw to the back, with a washing-house, and small place for the lasses. Then, up stairs, I

would have a pretty good family bedchamber, and a good light closet for keeping my groceries within it, besides a press fitted up for my napery, (of which I have a pretty good stock,) and——"

"You would have a very comfortable house, I have no doubt," said Captain Malcolm, who, although rarely guilty of the ill-breeding of interrupting any one, yet could not refrain from cutting short these ministerial arrangements. "Even as it is," added he, "you don't seem to be ill off—this is a very good room, and such a view from your window! Will you dare to attempt it, Lucy?"

"Not before witnesses," replied Lucy. "So I shall look about me elsewhere, and perhaps I may find something better adapted to my pencil." And she was leaving the room, when Mr M'Dow stepped forward, and interposed his huge person between her and the door.

"O, Miss Lucy, you're not going to run away from us, I hope? You'll find it uncommonly warm out by, just now; the sun's extremely powerful on the rocks."

"A noted sketcher, as papa calls me, minds neither heat nor cold," answered Lucy; "and I shall easily find either a shady spot or a cool breeze."

"Well, then, since you will go out, trust yourself to me, and I'll take you where you'll find both, and the most beautiful prospect, into the bargain."

At that moment the door opened, and a thick yellow man, with no particular features, dressed in a short coat, tartan trews, and a very large ill-coloured neckcloth, entered the room, and was introduced by the minister as his cousin and brother-in-law, Mr Dugald M'Dow, from Glasgow, then on a visit at the Manse.

"We're just going to take a turn in the garden, Mr Dugald," said his host; "will you get your hat and join us?"

"With the greatest pleasure," replied Mr Dugald, with a strong accent and a stiff conceited bow; then popping down a seal-skin cap from a peg in the passage, he was instantly accoutred, and the party set forth.

"I wish it had been earlier in the season,

Miss Lucy," said Mr M'Dow, as he ushered her into his kail-yard by a narrow slimy path, overrun with long sprawling bushes; "a month ago I could have treated you to as fine berries as perhaps you ever tasted. They were uncommonly large and jisey, and at the same time extremely high-flavoured. I have a little red hairy berry that's very deleeshus; and there's the honey-blobs, an uncommon fine berry—a great deal of jise in it. I was rather unlucky in my rasps this season; they were small and wormy, and a very poor crop; but my currins were amazingly prolific and uncommonly jisey. In fact, I couldn't use the half of them, and it was really vexatious to see them absolutely rotting on the bushes. The want of a lady at the berry season is a great want, and one that's sorely felt; for though my lass is an exceeding good plain cook, yet she's not mistress of the higher branches of cookery, such as the making of jams and jeellies, and these things; but I would fain flatter myself, by the time the berry season comes round again, I may have a fair lady to

manage them for me. Do you think I may venture to hope so, Miss Lucy?"

Lucy was not aware of the nature of the minister's hopes, nor even conscious of his faltering accent and tender look; for she was considering whether she might not make a sketch from the spot where she was standing; and at the same moment Captain Malcolm turned round and directed his daughter's attention to some particular beauty in the landscape, that had attracted his own. And again Lucy's book was opened, and her pencil in her hand, ready to begin, when again Mr M'Dow struck in.

"Now, before you begin, Miss Lucy, I would beg as a most particular favour, that you would just take a look of my offices; they are in a shameful state, to be sure, for a lady to visit, but the instant I get my decreet, they shall be all clean demolished; and what I'm very desirous of, is to have your opinion as to the most proper situation for the new ones."

"I don't think Lucy's opinion will be at all a sound one," said Captain Malcolm; "she is too fond of the picturesque ever to consider

the useful, so you had better leave her to her sketch."

"I'll not take your word for that, Captain; I have a great respect for a lady's opinion, and there's no lady whose opinion I set a higher value on than Miss Lucy's. Ah! Miss Lucy, you'll really oblige me if you'll give me the benefit of your fine taste;" then in a lower tone, and with great (intended) softness, "I'm really extremely anxious to please you!"

And Lucy, good-humouredly laughing at the idea of Mr M'Dow's desiring to please her in a matter so perfectly indifferent to her, again put up her sketch-book, and suffered herself to be conducted over the localities of the glebe.

CHAPTER XX.

HAVING given her assent to all the projected improvements, Lucy flattered herself she should now be free from farther molestation. Again she attempted to rid herself of the assiduities of Mr M'Dow, and was gliding away, as she hoped unperceived, when, striding after her like a seven-league Ogre, he called, "Miss Lucy—Miss Lucy! you're not running away from us, I hope? this is just about the time I ordered a slight refreshment to be ready," pulling out his watch; "you'll do me the honour to partake of it, I hope?"

Lucy declined, on the plea of having already had ample refreshment, and being much more inclined to sketch than to eat; but Lucy must have been made of stone and lime to have been able to withstand the importunities of Mr M'Dow;

he was as urgent as though his very existence had depended upon her partaking of his "slight refreshment," and she was at length compelled, much against her inclination, to return to the *salle à manger*. During their absence a table had been covered, but the arrangements were not finally concluded, for a stout, ruddy, yellow-haired damsel was rattling away amongst knives and forks, as though she had been turning over so many down feathers.

"I expected to have found every thing ready by this time," said Mr M'Dow; "what have you been about, Jess?" But Jess continued to stamp and clatter away without making any reply.

"I'll just show you the way to my study, till the refreshment's put upon the table," said Mr M'Dow; and finding all remonstrance in vain, his guests submitted with a good grace, and were conducted to a very tolerable room up stairs, where were a few shelves of books, a backgammon board, a fowling-piece, and a fishing-rod, with shot, lines, and flies, scattered about. There was also a sofa, with a dirty crumpled

cover, where Mr Dugald seemed to have been lounging with a flute and a music book. In one corner stood a table, with a pile of books, some of them in bindings very unlike the rest of the furniture.

"That's a parcel of books," said Mr M'Dow, "that I bought at the Auchnagoil rouping. I just bought the lot as you see them. I believe there's a good deal of trash amongst them, but I've had no time to examine them yet."

Lucy began to examine the books, and opening a little volume of Gambold, she exclaimed to her father, "What a charming picture of a clergyman, is it not, papa?" And Captain Malcolm, taking the book, read the passage aloud :—

> "He was a man so pure in private life,
> So all devoted to the things above;
> So mere a servant both of Christ and men,
> You'd say he acted without spark of nature,
> Save that each motion flow'd with ease and beauty."

"O, as to that," said Mr M'Dow, throwing one of his huge arms over the back of his chair, and swinging himself to and fro, "I can truly say, for my own part, I should think it due to

myself to feel at my ease in all companies;" and a long self-complacent pinch of snuff followed.

"Don't you think, papa, that is exactly the description of our good Mr Stuart?" said Lucy, as she again looked over the volume.

"Mr Stuart certainly does bear a strong resemblance to this picture," said Captain Malcolm; "and it is always pleasing when we can recognise in a living character the lineaments of such a portrait—we are so apt to look upon it as the *beau ideal*.—You are of course acquainted with Mr Stuart," added he, addressing Mr M'Dow, "and can also bear testimony to the likeness?"

"I *am* acquainted with Mr Stuart," replied Mr M'Dow, coldly; "but I don't know how it is, we don't often meet—he's not a very social man.—But I wonder if that woman's going to give us our refreshments to-day?" Then going to the door, he bawled down, "Jess, woman, for any sake, what are you about?—I've no bell in this room, which is a great inconvenience; and I don't think it worth my while to be at any expense till I get my decreet."

"Ah, here is my favourite Goldsmith!" exclaimed Lucy, trembling for a dissertation upon teinds, localities, and decreets; "familiar as his Deserted Village is, I never can refrain from reading it whenever I meet with it."

"*Apropos* of clerical pictures," said Captain Malcolm, no less sick of his host's vulgar egotism, "I don't know a more delightful one than that of his parish priest."

"I'm really amazed what that woman can be doing with our refreshments," said Mr M'Dow, pulling out his watch, with visible marks of impatience.

"In the meantime, we may refresh our memories with an old acquaintance, the Village Clergyman," said Captain Malcolm, reading the following lines:—

> "His house was known to all the vagrant train,
> He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain;
> The long-remember'd beggar was his guest,
> Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
> The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
> Claim'd kindred there, and had his claim allow'd;
> The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
> Sat by his fire——"

Here Mr M'Dow burst forth with, "Well,

Captain, I'm really amazed how, with your excellent abilities and good principles, you can think that man a pattern for a dignified clergyman! His house must have been a perfect receptacle for blackguards. I would think it highly improper in me to allow one of those vagrants to set their foot within my door; if they want to hear me, let them come to my church."

"But they would rather wish you to hear them," said Mr Dugald.

"I've no doubt of that," said Mr M'Dow, emphatically; "but I would have little to do, if I was to sit up listening to all the worthless vagabonds that come in my way."

"Perhaps," said Lucy, timidly, "their vices are often the effect of their ignorance, and a word spoken in season might go far to enlighten and reclaim them."

"Oh, Miss Lucy," said Mr M'Dow, with an air of gallantry, "there's nothing I admire more in your sex than your gentleness and softness; but I'm sorry to say, it exposes you very much to be imposed upon, and most shamefully taken

in; and I'll just appeal to you yourself, now, how it would answer in a house, I'll suppose you're the mistress of, to have your kitchen filled with all the clam-jamphray of the country, drunken soldiers, randy beggars, ill-tongued tinklers, and so on—how it would do, I say, for a young lady of your delicacy and refinement going down to order your dinner, to find the very scum of the earth sitting, perhaps, on your kitchen-dresser ?"

" That is, indeed, a climax to be avoided," said Captain Malcolm, laughing; " and I'm afraid, Lucy, you must admit, that, charming as your favourite picture is, it is one which, in these days, it would not do to copy too closely. We may please ourselves by such representations of primitive manners; but I fear they no longer exist, except in the poet's page, or your imagination. Steam-boats and stage-coaches have now brought each village and hamlet in close contact with some great town, even with London itself; and the evils the poet so beautifully predicted are, I fear, coming on apace. I doubt we should now in vain seek from the Land's End to

John-o'-Groat's House for a 'sweet Auburn,' whose 'best riches' are 'ignorance of wealth.' But I see Lucy won't give up her love for beggars, for all we can say."

Lucy smiled, as she replied—"Mr M'Dow's representation of Christian charity is certainly very different from the poet's; but I am still inclined to side with him, and to think that much may be made of human nature, even in its worst state, by kindness, as Mrs Fry has testified; and so I believe good Mr Stuart has often found it. The lines that follow are still more descriptive of him. Pray, papa, read them;" and Captain Malcolm went on:—

"Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And even his failings lean'd to virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watch'd, and wept, and felt, and pray'd for all;
And as a bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

"Allow me, in the meantime, to lead the way to something more substantial, Miss Lucy," cried Mr M'Dow, seizing her hand, as Jess put

her head in at the door; and having given a glare with her eyes, and wide opened her mouth, emitting a sort of guttural sound, importing that "aw's ready," galloped down stairs again, as hard and fast as she could.

"Give me leave, Miss Lucy—but the stair's rather narrow for two—you know the way; turn to the left hand of my trance.* It's very easy for these poets to preach; but it's not so easy always for us preachers to practize—hoch, ho!"

This sentiment uttered, a grace was hurried over; and the company seated themselves at table, which was literally covered with dishes, all close huddled together. In the middle was a tureen of leek soup, *alias* cocky-leeky, with prunes; at one end, a large dish of innumerable small clammy fresh-water trouts; at the other, two enormous fat ducks, stuffed to the throat with onions, and decorated with onion rings round their legs and pinions. At the corners

* Trance—in England, a deep swoon; in Scotland, a narrow passage.

were minced collops and tripe, confronted with a dish of large old pease, drowned (for they could not swim) in butter; next, a mess of mashed potatoes, scored and rescored with the marks of the kitchen-knife—a weapon which is to be found in all kitchens, varying in length from one to three feet; and in uncivilized hands, used indiscriminately to cut meat, fish, fowl, onions, bread, and butter. Saucers full of ill-coloured pickles filled up the interstices.

"I ordered merely a slight refreshment," said Mr M'Dow, surveying his banquet with great complacency; "I think it preferable to a more solid *mail* in this weather. Of all good Scotch dishes, in my opinion, there's none equal to cocky-leeky; as a friend of mine said, it's both nectar and ambrosia. You'll find that uncommonly good, Miss Lucy, if you'll just try it; for it's made by a receipt of my mother's, and she was always famous for cocky-leeky; the prunes are a great improvement; they give a great delicacy to the flavour; my leeks are not come to their full strength yet; but they are extremely sweet; you may help me to a few

more of the broth, Captain, and don't spare the leeks. I never see cocky-leeky, without thinking of the honest man who found a snail in his: 'Tak ye that snack, my man,' says he, 'for looking sae like a plum-damy;' hach, hach, ho! There's a roasted hare coming to remove the fish, and I believe you see your refreshment; there's merely a few trifles coming."

Lucy had accepted one of Mr Dugald's little muddy trouts, as the least objectionable article of the repast; and while Mr M'Dow's mouth was stuffed with prunes and leeks, silence ensued. But having dispatched a second plateful, and taken a bumper of wine, he began again, "I can answer for the ducks, Miss Lucy, if you'll do me the favour to try them—A clean knife and fork, Jess, to Mr Dugald to cut them—I prefer ducks to a goose; a goose is an inconvenient sort of bird, for it's rather large for one person, and it's not big enough for two. But my stars, Jess! what *is* the meaning of this? The ducks are perfectly raw!" in an accent of utter despair. "What *is* the meaning of it? You must take it to the brander, and get it done

as fast as you can. How came Eppy to go so far wrong, I wonder !"

Jess here emitted some of her guttural sounds, which, being translated, amounted to this, that the jack had run down, and Eppy couldn't get it set agoing again.

" That's most ridiculous !" exclaimed Mr M'Dow, indignantly ; " when I was at the pains to show her myself how to manage her. She's the Auchnagoil jack, which I bought, and a most famous goer. But you see how it is, Miss Lucy ; you must make allowance for a bachelor's house—there's a roasted hare coming.—Jess, take away the fish, and bring the hare to me." The hare was herewith introduced, and flung, rather than placed, before her master. " Oh, this is quite intolerable ! There's really no bearing this ! The hare's burnt to a perfect stick ! The whole jise is out of its body !"

" Your cook's not a good hare-dresser, that's all that can be said," quoth Mr Dugald.

" Very well said—extremely good," said Mr M'Dow, trying to laugh off his indignation ; " and, after all, I believe it's only a little scow-

thered.* Do me the favour to try a morsel of it, Miss Lucy, with a little jeelly. Jess, put down the jeelly. Oh, have you nothing but a pig† to put it in?" demanded he, in a most wrathful accent, as Jess clapped down a large native jelly-pot upon the table. "Where's the handsome cut crystal jeelly-dish I bought at the Auchnagoil roup?"

Jess's face turned very red, and a downcast look of conscious guilt told that the "handsome cut crystal jelly-dish" was no more.

"This is really most provoking!—But if you'll not taste the hare, Miss Lucy, will you do me the kindness to try the minched collops? or a morsel of tripe? It's a sweet, simple dish—a great favourite of my mother's—both you and the Captain are really poor eaters, so you and I, Mr Dugald, must just keep each other in countenance."

And another pause ensued, till at last an

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* Scorched.

† Pig—in England, an animal; in Scotland, a piece of crockery.

order was given to take every thing away, "And bring the few trifles—but *will* you make less noise? there's no hearing ourselves speak for you;" but Jess rattled away, nevertheless, till she vanished, leaving the door wide open. A few minutes elapsed before she re-appeared, with the greasy apparition of Eppy at her back, standing on the threshold with her hands full.

"Now, take the pigeon-pie to Mr Dugald; bring the puddin' to me; put the puffs and cheesecakes at the sides, and the cream in the middle. I'm sorry I've no jeellies and *blaw mangiys* for Miss Lucy. If you won't taste the pie, do me the favour to take a bit of this pudin'; it's quite a simple puddin', made from a recipe of my mother's."

Lucy accepted a bit of the "simple puddin'," which, as its name implied, was a sort of mawkish squash, flavoured with peat-reek whisky.

"I'm afraid the puddin's not to your taste, Miss Lucy; you're making no hand of it; will you try a jam puff? I'm sure you'll find them good, they come from Glasgow, sent by my good mother; I must really taste them, if it

were only out of respect to her. Oh! Miss Lucy, will you not halve a puff with me?"

The minister and his friend having now ate and drank copiously of all that was upon the table, Captain Malcolm said, "My daughter has not yet accomplished the object of her visit here, and we must soon be returning home, so you have no time to lose, my dear," to Lucy, who started up from table like a bird from its cage, "if indeed it is not lost already," he added, as Lucy and he walked to the window. The bright blue sky had now changed to one of misty whiteness, showers were seen drifting along over the scattered isles, and even while they spoke, a sudden gust of wind and rain came sweeping along, and all the beauteous scenery was in an instant blotted from the sight.

Captain Malcolm was not a person to be disconcerted by trifles; but on the present occasion he could not refrain from expressing his regret, as he every moment felt an increasing repugnance to the company of Mr M'Dow and his friend, and still more on Lucy's account than his own; it seemed like contamination for so

fair and pure a creature to be seated between two such coarse barbarians. Mr M'Dow affected to sympathize in the disappointment; but it was evident he was exulting in the delay.

Shower after shower followed in such quick succession, that Lucy found the object of her visit completely defeated. At length the clouds rolled away, but the day was too far advanced to admit of farther tarriance; and besides, both the father and daughter were impatient to extricate themselves from the overpowering hospitalities of Mr M'Dow.

"I hope you will have many opportunities of taking drawings here," said he, with a significant tenderness of look and manner, as he assisted Lucy to mount her pony; "and when the manse is harled, and I get my new offices, the view will be much improved."

Lucy bowed as she hastily took the bridle into her own hands, and gladly turned her back on *the manse* and the minister.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE showers had passed away; the rainbow was "smiling on the faded storm;" the fragrant air was mild; the herds and flocks were cropping the dewy grass; the declining sun shot "a slant and mellow radiance;" and all things seemed imbued with new life and beauty. Captain Malcolm and his daughter proceeded for some time in silence; each felt the beauty and the harmony of nature, and as they slowly paced, side by side, amongst the windings of the green hills, they needed not words to utter the feelings of their hearts. Captain Malcolm was the first to speak.

"You are unusually meditative, Lucy," said her father. "What is engaging your thoughts so much?"

"I have been thinking, papa," said Lucy,

rousing herself from her reverie, "what a sweet thing silence is."

"That is to say, you admire silence, as La Bruyère did solitude?"

"Oh, certainly, silence is sweeter when shared with another who can understand its beauty. But after such a day—such a coarse unpleasant day as we have spent, even solitary silence would be sweet and grateful. Had Mr M'Dow given us some nice clean well-boiled potatoes and milk, and have allowed us to walk about and enjoy the beautiful scenery, how much more pleasantly and profitably the day would have been spent!"

"Mr M'Dow is, indeed, a coarse specimen of a coarse propensity," said Captain Malcolm, "and has fallen into a common error, that of seeking to raise himself by appearances; as if these could exalt the character, especially of a minister of the gospel; of one who is 'as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.'"

"One is always pleased with the humble fare of a cottage," said Lucy; "and I am sure most

people would feel additional respect for the simplicity of a clergyman's, or indeed any one's style of living, when proportioned to their means."

"Certainly," said Captain Malcolm; "poverty in itself is never despicable or ridiculous, except to vulgar or thoughtless minds. It is only when it carries pretension along with it, that we feel privileged to laugh at so preposterous a union. We are also apt to be more disgusted with a coarse gourmand than with a refined epicure, though there certainly is not more moral or intellectual superiority evinced in the love of turtle and venison, or even *fricandeau* and *blanquette*, than in cocky-leeky and ducks."

"Oh, how much I lament having lost this day!" sighed Lucy, as she stopped her pony to admire a lovely peep between the hills.

"I fear your lost day is not to be understood in the same sense as the Emperor's was," said her father. "I suspect it is only your lost sketches you lament."

Lucy smiled as she acknowledged the fact. "But surely, papa," she added, "you must

allow it was rather hard, instead of roaming amongst rocks and glens, and filling my *porte-feuille* with sketches, to be shut up all day with Mr M'Dow! Indeed, papa, his company is any thing but agreeable."

"I am aware of that, my dear, but, as a clergyman, I wish to show him all the respect in my power. His sacred office I consider the most important in which a human being can be engaged, and the most difficult, when one considers what various states of mind a faithful pastor must be called upon to minister to."

"But you surely cannot call him a faithful pastor, papa? I cannot possibly conceive any one consulting him about spiritual matters, or even asking him for a prayer—I am sure I could not."

"I never heard you so severe upon any one, Lucy. When you have lived longer in the world, you will find there are worse characters in the church than Mr M'Dow, though, happily, there are also others whose genius, learning, and piety, shed a lustre over the age in which they live. Mr M'Dow is not an im-

moral man, otherwise I would not have gone to visit him."

"The most offensive part of his character, I think," said Lucy, "next to his love of eating, is his constant jocularity; not that I should like a morose austere pastor, who would look upon all gaiety as sin, but I should like to see one, as Cowper says, 'serious in a serious cause.'"

"I agree with you," said her father, "that when a clergyman views in its true light the importance and the responsibility of the office he has undertaken; an office which, as an old writer says, is 'a weight under which angels' shoulders might shrink,' his great object will be to get men to think seriously, not to laugh lightly; though wit being a natural talent, like every other, it may be turned to good account."

"Ah! there is old Sandy!" exclaimed Lucy, as a sudden turn of the road gave to view an old grey-haired shepherd on the hill-side, basking in the rays of the evening sun, with his book and his dog. "How finely he is in keeping with the landscape! I wish we were nearer, to have a little conversation with him, for I find

both pleasure and improvement in conversing with him; he is simple and artless, but not vulgar, for he knows his Bible, and that truly 'maketh wise the simple.'"

"He is indeed a very favourable specimen of humble life," said Captain Malcolm; "for I have always found that where common education is built on solid religious principles, it never fails to elevate the mind, and give that contented and independent spirit, which is a nation's truest strength and safety."

"How perfectly he realizes Grahame's picture of a Sabbath evening shepherd," said Lucy, still gazing on the picturesque figure of her old favourite:—

> ——"Behold the man!
> The grandsire and the saint; his silvery locks
> Beam in the parting ray; before him lies,
> Upon the smooth-cropt sward, the open book,
> His comfort, stay, and ever new delight."

"And there is a setting sun," said Captain Malcolm, as they emerged from the glen, and the blazing luminary burst upon their sight:

" That would defy all painting, for, as Wordsworth says,

> ——" Such beauty varying in the light
> Of living nature, cannot be pourtray'd
> By words, nor by the pencil's silent skill;
> But is the property of him alone
> Who hath beheld it, noted it with care,
> And in his mind recorded it with love!"

" Oh, papa, do let us alight here for a few minutes to feast our eyes with this lovely sunset," cried Lucy, when they had gained the summit of a hill, which gave to view all the glories of the scene—the sun, with all his retinue of flaming clouds, sinking to rest in the bosom of the waters.

Captain Malcolm loved to encourage in his children a taste for the beauties of nature; a pleasure so cheap, so pure, and so elevating, and he readily assented to his daughter's request. Seating themselves on a grassy spot by the side of a wild mountain brook, they gazed " with eyes intent on the refulgent spectacle." At length Lucy said, " How perfectly Barton has

realized such an evening as this, with all its accompanying feelings, in that sweet poem of his, ' Morning and Evening ;' every verse seems to me a perfect picture in itself, and a picture, too, that excites such pure and holy thoughts !" And her soft blue eyes shone with an expression of love and adoration, as she contemplated the glories of the heavens, and recalled the beautiful imagery of the poet.

" It is a comparison he draws between the rising and the setting sun, is it not ?" said Captain Malcolm ; " my memory for these things is not so good as it was, Lucy ; but I dare say you can repeat it to me word for word, and this is just the time and place for hearing it." Lucy, in a sweetly modulated voice and simple manner, then recited the last stanzas of Bernard Barton's " Morning and Evening :"—

" 'Tis when day's parting light,
Dazzling no more the sight,
Its chastening glory to the eye is granting,
That ' thoughts too deep for tears,'
Unearthly hopes and fears,
And voiceless feelings, in the heart are panting.

" While thus the western sky
Delights the gazing eye,
With thrilling beauty, touching and endearing ;
What still of earth is fair,
Borrows its beauty there,
Though every borrow'd charm is disappearing.

" Ere yet those charms grow dim,
Creation's vesper hymn,
Grateful and lovely, is from earth ascending ;
Till, with that song of praise,
The hearts of those who gaze
With solemn feelings of delight are blending.

" Then from those portals bright
A farewell gleam of light
Breaks with unearthly glory on the vision ;
And through the folding doors
The eye of thought explores
Seraphic forms and fantasies elysian.

" These pass like thought away !
Yet may their hallow'd sway
Rest on the heart,—as dew-drops round adorning
The drooping silent flowers,
Feed them through night's dark hours,
And keep them fresh and living till the morning.

" Thus should the sunset hour,
With soul-absorbing power,
Nurse by its glories the immortal spirit ;
And plume its wings of flight
To realms of cloudless light,
Regions its God hath form'd it to inherit.

" Fair, bright, and sweet is MORN !
When daylight, newly born,
In all its beauty is to sense appealing ;
Yet Eve to me is fraught
With more *unearthly thought,*
And purer touches of *immortal feeling !*"

The shades of evening began to gather around, but the gloom was still enlivened by streaks of sunshine on the mountain tops ; the silence and solitude that reigned, and the stupendous objects that surrounded them, filled the hearts of the father and daughter with solemn thoughts, and as they journeyed slowly home, they felt this was indeed the time for " unearthly thought" and " immortal feeling."

CHAPTER XXII.

LITTLE more was heard of Inch Orran for some weeks. He had gone upon a voyage of discovery to two of the Isles where the principal part of his property was situated, and was actively employed in detecting abuses, redressing grievances, making surveys, getting estimates, quarrelling with his neighbours, discarding his factor, threatening his vassals, and so forth, and all in the face of the worst and stormiest weather that ever was seen, even on a western island. At the end of some weeks, he returned to Inch Orran, and Glenroy and he soon after met at a county meeting. The Chief, as well as every one present, was immediately struck with the change that had taken place in the old man's appearance since his first arrival in the country;

in fact, he more resembled a livid skeleton than a living man.

"I am glad to see you safely returned to us, Inch Orran," said Glenroy, accosting him with much cordiality. "I'm afraid you have had but a fatiguing expedition?"

"Sir," returned his kinsman, "I desire to be excused from being either congratulated or interrogated."

And with a slight wave of his hand he turned away.

Glenroy could scarcely keep from strangling him for his insolence; but he saw death in the old man's face already, and he refrained. So swallowing the indignity, even although put in open court, he consoled his wounded pride by anticipating the rich reward that soon awaited his forbearance. Indeed, to all human appearance, the time was not far distant when the possessor of the long-coveted lands would be called on to relinquish them. It was evident he was then labouring under severe indisposition, though, when some one remarked to him that he appeared to have caught cold, he denied the

fact with much asperity. Then, as if to give the lie to the offensive insinuation, he mounted his horse, and rode home ten miles in a pour of rain, without greatcoat or umbrella. The following day he was still worse; but, nevertheless, being in one of his invincible fits of ill humour and obstinacy, he chose to stand out for six hours in wind and rain, seeing his potatoes lifted, carted, and measured, that he might take *his* measures accordingly.

The cold, bad as it was, might perhaps have ended like other colds, had it been treated in a gentlemanly way; but it was not Inch Orran's mode to treat any thing gently, or give place to any of the beggarly elements of human nature. He had likewise an utter contempt for doctors, without having a well-grounded faith in any thing else, unless it were in that phantom called Nature, which was the only thing (Simon excepted) that had any control over him. To Nature then he, in the first place, committed himself; but the cold grew worse and worse, in the most natural way possible. He then submitted himself to Simon, who boldly undertook

the cure; but Simon had only two recipes in the world, the one was *ale saps*,* the other was *Atholl brose*.†

In spite of nature and Simon, and saps and brose, Inch Orran's case became desperate, and then a doctor was called, but came in vain. Another was summoned, but with no better success. Glenroy was most attentive, but to no purpose. The patient grew gradually worse and worse, till at the end of a few weeks, all solicitude was vain, for Inch Orran ceased to breathe.

Mrs Malcolm behaved "as well as could be expected" on this trying occasion. She said it was just to be expected, for Mr Malcolm was an old man, and a very particular man, and it was no wonder he died, for he never minded a word she said; and with Mrs Macauley to sit by and assent to all her propositions, and listen to her complaints of Simon, and concert with her about her mourning, and talk over the cere-

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* Porridge made with ale.

† A composition of honey and whisky.

monials of the funeral, Mrs Malcolm was soon "wonderfully well."

It is a tormenting law which exists in Scotland, of keeping the will of the deceased a dead secret until after the interment—especially as wills are things so capricious in their nature as to defy the speculation of the living, and baffle all their attempts at anticipation. During that dread interval, how are the hearts of the nearest of kin of a childless miser, or a wealthy old bachelor, or a saving elderly spinster, agitated with the emotions of hope and fear! Doubts resolving themselves into certainties, and certainty fading away into doubt, as their omissions of duty, and commissions of offence, rise successively to view. In the present instance, the only parties who seemed privileged to entertain either hopes or fears, doubts or certainties, were Glenroy and Captain Malcolm, as the nearest relatives of the deceased, and both standing much in the same degree of propinquity. But the latter waved his pretensions in favour of the Chief, who therefore took upon himself the arrangement of the funeral, and also bore the whole burden of the fortnight's

suspense which intervened between the death and burial. Having seen the last remains of Inch Orran safely deposited in the family vault, Glenroy returned to the mansion of the departed to unseal the repositories, and cause them to render up their secrets. The search was soon ended. The first thing that presented itself was Inch Orran's settlement, or general disposition, new and neat, formally drawn up, and regularly signed and attested in the most business-like manner possible. But as the reading of a settlement is a tax too heavy to impose upon any save those who are to profit by it, it will be sufficient to extract the kernel from the voluminous husk, in which, for wise purposes, the law has thought proper to encase it, but which it is not every one's jaws that can penetrate. Suffice it therefore to say, that the settlement set forth, in the usual strain, for good causes and considerations, giving, granting, assigning, and disponing all houses, lands, heritages, debts, movables, goods and chattels, writs and evidents, &c. &c. &c. to Christopher Blancow, Isaac Knipes, and Mark Lipptrot, attorneys and scriveners, in trust, for be-

hoof of Ronald Malcolm, eldest son of Captain John Malcolm of Lochdhu, and his heirs and assignees, the proceeds during the life of the said Ronald Malcolm, until he shall have attained the age of twenty-six years, to be invested in the three per cent consols, there to accumulate. Not a farthing of the money was to be touched under any pretence; and the said Ronald Malcolm was not to be alimented or subsisted therefrom, but to be considered as having no right whatever in the premises, until he should have attained the aforesaid age. Failing the said Ronald Malcolm, his heirs, &c. the whole was to go to his father, without restriction of any kind. A small jointure to Mrs Malcolm, five hundred pounds to each of the trustees, a legacy of a thousand pounds, and an annuity of thirty, to Simon Small, for his faithful services, were the sole bequests contained in this inconsistent and capricious "disposition."

Glenroy was too much confounded at first to be able to be in a passion; it was only when he had collected his senses that his energies were roused, and he was able to articulate, with his

face in a flame, and his eyes flashing fire and fury, " Ronald Malcolm ! Oh certainly, a very proper person—*very*—I—hem—I wish you joy, sir," to Captain Malcolm, stamping his foot as he spoke. " Your son is very welcome !" in a voice of thunder—" perfectly welcome for me !" and, with a muttered oath, the Chief took an abrupt leave of the party of mourners; and, tearing off his crape and weepers, threw them into the loch, and returned home.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ALTHOUGH every body declared they had expected a most extraordinary settlement from Inch Orran, still this far surpassed the anticipations even of the most experienced, and afforded an ample field for animadversion to all. Yet perverse, unjust, and capricious wills, are things of such common occurrence, the only surprise is, that people should still continue to be surprised at them. Surprised, however, every one was, and none more so than the family at Lochdhu, who were perhaps the only people of the name who had not dreamt of either lairdship or legacy. Neither Captain nor Mrs Malcolm were people to be much elated with any portion of mere worldly prosperity, and this succession of their son's was not such as to call forth any very exuberant demonstrations of joy. It could

be of no immediate advantage to themselves or their children; for, situated as they were, with a narrow income and a large family, necessarily enduring many privations, a single year's rent of the estate would have been more beneficial to them now, than the accumulated treasures of a long minority might prove hereafter. But above all, they dreaded the effect this seducing prospect might have upon the mind of their son, with wealth and consequence thus placed before him, as the goal at which he must ultimately arrive, without any exertions of his own. Convinced as they were that the moral part of our nature is best developed amidst struggles and difficulties in the outset of life, they dreaded the various temptations to ease and pleasure which would beset his path. Yet, in spite of these sobering reflections, they hailed with gratitude the prospect that was still afar off, even though it neither gilded the present, nor cast any delusive glare on the future.

As for the young heir, he felt much as any other generous, warm-hearted boy would have done upon such an occasion, and many were the

romantic schemes which passed through his mind, and burst from his lips, in the first ardour of youthful emotion. Great was his disappointment at finding he could not, till the appointed time, dispossess himself of a farthing of his nominal wealth, and his heart revolted at the injustice that had been committed against his parents. He loved his mother with that deep and earnest love which a mother's virtues only can excite in the hearts of her children; and, contrasting the poverty and privations she endured with the comforts and luxuries he witnessed elsewhere, he was indignant at the barriers that were opposed to the gratification of his wishes.

Bent upon discovering some means by which his future wealth might be turned to the immediate benefit of his family, Ronald's mind became restless and dissatisfied; and his thoughts, occupied with vain wishes and impracticable projects, wandered far from the daily occupations he was wont to pursue with ardour and alacrity. Yet his was the restlessness of a noble mind, aiming at good which he could not realize.

He was beginning, as usual, one day with,

"Oh, how I wish!" when his father gently stopped him.

"My dear Ronald," said he, "I was in hopes your good sense would, before now, have suggested to you what a dangerous habit you are acquiring of constantly wishing."

"Dangerous, papa!" repeated Ronald; "how can that possibly be?"

"I consider it very dangerous," replied his father, mildly; "and so will you, I am very sure, when you come to reflect upon it. It is positive waste of time, and thought, and contentment. Wishing has been called the hectic of a fool. If it is not the proof of a dissatisfied mind, (which, in your case, I trust it is not,) it inevitably leads to it; for wishing is not very far from murmuring. It is not to inculcate an improvident habit, but a contented mind, that we are charged to take no thought of to-morrow."

"But in my situation, it is scarcely possible to avoid wishing," said Ronald.

"You surely do not mean to say it is scarcely possible for you to avoid indulging in an idle and foolish habit?" said his father, mildly. "We

have indeed little controul over circumstances—these are regulated by a higher power; but as rational and reflecting beings, we are accountable for the exercise of our faculties."

"But my wishes are not so much for myself as for others," said Ronald, reddening a little at the reproof.

"I am aware of that, my boy, for yours is not the sordid spirit that would merely seek its own gratification; but, nevertheless, you can do us no good by indulging those vain wishes of yours—perhaps, eventually, you could do us none had you the power of gratifying them, as it is very certain we know not the things that are best for us, and were our wishes granted, it might often be to our ruin. One thing you may be assured of, your mother and I would rather see you poor, if possessed of a grateful heart and contented mind, than master of millions with a restless and dissatisfied spirit. I forget what philosopher it is who says, 'It is better to be born with a cheerful temper than heir to ten thousand a-year.' For my part, I think its value is incalculable, when it springs from the right

source—faith and love. Such, I am sure, I have found it in your mother. You know but little of the privations she suffered in marrying me; but never have I even heard her utter a wish for any mere temporal benefit. *Her* wishes, Ronald, have been prayers, and we flattered ourselves we should, by the blessing of God, be enabled to make our children rich in contentment, if in nothing else. You will not then disappoint us, Ronald?"

Ronald could not answer, but his feelings were depicted on his open countenance, as he wrung his father's hand in silent emotion. From henceforth he sought to stifle his murmurs amid the sober realities of practical duties, kept in wholesome exercise throughout the daily walks of life.

But Ronald seemed destined only to feel the disquiet of riches without partaking of their enjoyments. The news of his succession had spread far and wide throughout the district; but the particulars were (as all particulars are) very variously and imperfectly stated, and of course much error and exaggeration prevailed, particularly amongst

the lower orders of the more remote vassals and tenants. The consequence was, the young heir was assailed, from all quarters, with petitions for, and remonstrances against this, that, and the other evil, while a hoard of grievances, that had lain slumbering for many a year, were now brought to light, and laid before him, in the sure and certain expectation of being all speedily redressed. Wives came from afar to speak for the renewing of their husbands' leases; and mothers walked many a weary mile to get a word of the young Laird about the enlarging of their sons' crofts; and widows crossed many a rough ferry, and climbed many a long hill, to petition for a cow's grass, or to claim favour, in right of their husbands or their fathers having lost an arm or a leg, serving under a Captain Angus Malcolm (some tenth cousin of the last Laird) in the American war. In vain did Ronald protest to these poor people that he possessed no more power than they did themselves. He was heard with sorrowful incredulity, or renewed entreaties, that if he could not help them him-

self, he would speak a word for them to those who could. But Ronald had already found of what stuff Messrs Blancow, Knipes, and Lipptrot, were made, and that it was in vain to attempt to seek favour at their hands. Faithful to the trust confided in them, that of turning every thing to money, they had already commenced their operations in the most systematic manner, and were deaf as adders to all appeals that came merely recommended by mercy or liberality. But it was in vain Ronald sought to convince the malcontents. It is at all times difficult to convince the poor, that those they deem rich and powerful, *cannot* relieve them, if they choose; but, with the lower class of the Highlanders, it is next to an impossibility to make them comprehend how their superiors should not have the power to redress every grievance, and supply every want, as promptly as it is made known.

Many was the slow reluctant step Ronald saw at length turn away from him, as if still lingering in the expectation of being recalled; and many was the groan, and the sigh, and the shake

of the head, and the shrug of the shoulder, and the discontented "weel-a-weel!" he received, in answer to his protestations. Such was the young heir's initiation to his inheritance.

CHAPTER XXIV.

But Ronald's cares, had they been weighed in a balance, would have been found light as feathers, compared to Glenroy's wrath. Not even the pains of the gout, which ensued, could drive the disappointment from his mind. There are people—alas, for those who know them !—who have never done with a subject, especially if it is of a disagreeable nature. "They feed upon disquiet" themselves, and force others to partake of the same sorry fare.

Such was Glenroy's practice; and upon this occasion his colloquial powers had received an *impetus* which seemed likely to keep them going to the last. It was a still-beginning, never-ending theme;—morning, noon, and night, he spoke of the injury he had sustained, as though he had been robbed, and his son murdered; till,

by dint of hearing the same thing so constantly repeated, he at length talked himself, and all around him, into the firm belief that he had been cheated and circumvented in the most shameful manner by the Lochdhu family; and as his head was none of the clearest, or his reasoning powers of the strongest, the proofs, for or against, were all mixed up in one solid mass of invective.

"It is not the value of the property that I care about," he would repeat, at least ten times a-day, to his all-enduring friends, Benbowie and Mrs Macauley, as they sat by his gouty chair, the one with his tobacco-box, the other with her work-basket, shaping-scissors, and spectacles. "But I hate the dirty underhand way these people have gone about the business; I was completely thrown off my guard by them; but I never knew one of these canting dogs that wasn't a complete hypocrite."

"On my conscience that's very true, Glenroy," said Benbowie.

"I'm as sure as I am of my own existence," continued the Chief, "that there was a regular laid down plan, from the moment of the old

man's arrival in the country. You may remember he had hardly entered this house when that Ronald—that young saint—was at his heels; sent to play the spy, and show off before him. The father knew better than to face the old dragon himself, and so he set his son to dodge him and fawn upon him; he had his lesson, and knew what he was about the day he came here. I saw through them even then."

"On my conscience, I really believe so," said Benbowie.

"I have no doubt it was these incendiaries that were at the bottom of that insane proposal the old scrivener made me about Edith; but I would rather a thousand times have seen her in her grave, than the wife of any beggarly tacksman's son,—and to cut out her brother too!"

"Well, now is not that very curious!" said Mrs Macauley; "are not these just the very words that I heard Mr Reginald using the t'other day? 'Edith,' says he, 'I would rather see you killed a thousand times, than that you should have disgraced yourself by marrying the tacksman's son.'—'Oh, Reginald,' said she, 'you know that

could not be, for I am engaged to be married to you, and so I would not marry Ronald even if he were a king.'"

"You'll really make these children as great fools as you are yourself," cried Glenroy, impatiently. "How can you put such nonsense into their heads!"

"Me, Glenroy! 'deed, I never put any thing into their heads. I would be very sorry; so far from that, when the boys said that you hated Ronald, for he was a bad boy, I said to them, Well, childer, your papa may say what he pleases, and you ought to mind every thing he says, when it is good and fit to be remembered; and when he happens to say what is maybe not just so right, then you must be sure to forget it."

"I really don't believe there is such another fool as yourself in existence," cried Glenroy; "and I only wish you had this gout of mine in your tongue, to silence it."

"Well, I'm sure I wish I had, if it would take it out of your toe, Glenroy; but wait till you hear.—'Oh,' says Norman, 'I shall take care never to forget that he cheated me out of

an estate.'—'Nor I,' says Reginald, 'that he had the impudence to want to marry Edith: a pretty husband indeed for Edith, a poor tacksman's son!'—Childer, says I, I fear you read your Bible to little purpose, or you would not speak evil of your neighbour, or be so scornful of any body for being more humbly born than yourselves; for we are such curious creatures, we cannot tell what may happen to us. You ought to remember how Joseph, that was sold for a slave, came to be a ruler over his proud brethren; and was not there King David, the greatest of all the kings of the earth,—what was he but a poor shepherd boy? But it pleased God to make him a great king, and if it please Providence to appoint that Ronald should live to become a great man, who knows but he may be married to Miss Edith——"

"Providence!—appoint!—what is it you mean, Mrs Macauley; do you know what it is you are saying?" cried Glenroy, furiously.

"'Deed I do, Glenroy, and I'm sure so do you, that it is Providence that appoints our lot——"

"Providence!—appoint!—lot!—do you mean to make my children predestinarians?" cried Glenroy, passionately. "I thought you had been merely a simpleton, but I see you're a most mischievous creature, and I cannot suffer you in my family, if you sport such doctrines as these."

"Well, Glenroy, if you think so, I cannot help it;" and poor Mrs Macauley's heart rose at the thoughts of having to choose between her Chief and her conscience.

"But I don't believe you know yourself what it is you mean," cried he, somewhat mollified at sight of her distress.

"'Deed, then, but I know very well, Glenroy."

"Then I say you are a very dangerous and mischievous woman," cried Glenroy, enraged that she would not take advantage of the loophole he had opened for her escape.

"Well, maybe I am, Glenroy," was the humble reply; "but I'm very sure I do not mean it."

"You are really not fit to associate with either

men or children," cried the Chief, striking his crutch on the floor as he spoke.

"Well; may be not," was said in a very dejected tone; "but you may say what you please of me, Glenroy, for there's no harm in that; but I do not like to hear you casting out with Providence."

"Who's casting out, as you call it, with Providence, you old goose?"

"Well, I really thought you was affronted at my saying that we did not get every thing our own way in this world, but that Providence appoints our lot for us."

"Then I tell you again, Mrs Macauley, that I will not suffer such doctrines in my family; I'm for none of your predestinarian notions here. I suppose you'll have my servants cutting my throat, and saying it was appointed. I—I—it's really a most infamous doctrine."

"Oh! Glenroy, that is not the Christian notion of the thing at all; it's only poor ignorant heathen craaters, or them who do not take pains to read their Bible, who can misuse it that way; for how can we think we are appointed to do

mischief to one another, when does not He tell us that we are to love our neighbour as ourselves? 'Deed, if an angel were to tell me the contrary, I would not believe it."

"You really—you know nothing about the matter, and I desire I may hear no more such doctrines; there's no knowing where it would end."

"'Deed, then, I think it would just end in our being of contented minds, and learning to walk humbly with God, casting all our care upon Him who careth for us."

"Oh, you are setting up for a saint too! but I'm for no saints in this house, remember."

"Well, you know if you wish me to go my way, I cannot help it; it is my duty to go." Here tears streamed down Mrs Macauley's cheeks.

"Yes, yes, you're ready to go, and leave me at the very time when you might be of some use; you might at least have the discretion to stay till I have got somebody to take your place; but do as you please."

"Oh, Glenroy, how can you think it would

please me to leave you and your children !" cried poor Mrs Macauley, quite overcome.

" Well, stay where you are," cried Glenroy, somewhat softened; " only don't go and fill the children's heads with these pernicious doctrines of yours." Mrs Macauley's face fell at the conclusion of this sentence.

" I must speak the truth to them, Glenroy," said she, with a sigh, " whatever may come of it; and I think we are such curious craaters, and know so little, that we cannot tell what may happen to us. It may be God's will to raise us up, or to cast us down."

" Are you at it again," interrupted Glenroy, furiously; " when I tell you, Mrs Macauley, I will not suffer these doctrines in my family ?"

" Well, Glenroy, I am sorry it should be my lot to displease you, for I owe you a great deal of kindness, and I would lay down the hair of my head for you and your childer, but I cannot give up my principles."

" Who's meddling with your principles?" demanded Glenroy, again softened at sight of her distress.

"Well, I thought it was not like you to do it; you who have such good principles of your own."

"It's my opinion," said Glenroy, "you know nothing about principles, I don't believe you know what they are; are they flesh and blood, or are they skin and bone?"

"Oh! Glenroy, I wonder to hear you, who have so much good sense, speak that way, when you know what respectable things principles are, and what poor craaters we would be without them. No, Glenroy, when I die, I will leave those things behind me; but I expect to carry my principles along with me, for no doubt they will be of use to me in the next world."

"That's very true," said Benbowie, waking out of a doze; "on my conscience, we should keep all we can."

"I don't believe there's a man on earth but myself that could put up with two such idiots," muttered Glenroy.

"Oh! 'deed, we have all our appointed trials, Glenroy," said Mrs Macauley, looking in his face with the most perfect good-nature and

sympathy; "but we have all a great deal to be thankful for, too, and myself most of all, for 'man proposes but God disposes,' and so He has disposed you to be a good and kind friend to me, Glenroy."

"You speak a great deal of nonsense," said the Chief, whose wrath, having had its full swing, now evaporated; "but I don't believe you know what you say, and I daresay you mean well; and there's the children calling you." And he graciously extended his hand, which received a kindly pressure from the placable Mrs Macauley.

"O, Glenroy!" cried she, while tears of joy twinkled in her eyes; "is it not a great blessing that you have not cast out with me, and that, from no power in me to hinder you?—Well, my dears, I'm coming," as another call from the children made her hasten to join them in a little excursion.

CHAPTER XXV.

If it is difficult to impress truth upon the minds of children, it must be owned there is nothing so easy as to instil prejudice. The effect produced by these and similar invectives, which the young Glenroys were in the daily habit of hearing, may therefore be easily imagined. The Lochdhu family became gradually associated in their minds with every thing that was base and treacherous; while Ronald, in particular, was the object of a sort of undefined ill will to the two boys, who had already learnt to ape the Chieftain's tone and adopt his sentiments. Even the gentle, timid, loving Edith was insensibly borne along in the stream. She was still too young to comprehend the nature of the case, or to conceive how pride, prejudice, and envy may distort the fairest and simplest statement.

Neither could so monstrous a supposition ever enter into her young imagination, as that her papa could be in the wrong. She could therefore only grieve in silence that her once dear friends should have been so wicked as to have told lies and cheated, and that Ronald, dear Ronald!—who had given her a white owl, and was training a starling for her—should have been such a bad boy as to rob Norman, and to want to have her for his wife, when he was only a poor tacksman's son, and she was the daughter of the Chief.

Such was the taint already communicated by pride and prejudice to the young and simple heart, by nature "rich in love and sweet humanity."

With all Glenroy's violence and gasconading, he nevertheless did not proceed to open hostilities with the Lochdhu family. When they met, which was but seldom, he even felt his spirit so rebuked beneath the mild and unassuming, yet open and fearless aspect of Captain Malcolm, that his blustering subsided into a dead calm, or merely showed itself in a still haughtier deportment. His kinsman was at no loss to guess that

this accession of dignity in his manner was occasioned by anger and disappointment, and he was aware how unavailing argument or expostulation would be against prejudice so unreasonable and inveterate. He also knew, that offended pride is only to be propitiated by the humiliation of the object of offence. To attempt, therefore, to conciliate the Chief, on the footing of equality, he perceived would only exasperate him the more; and as there was nothing on his part which called for concession, he deemed it the wisest plan to allow matters to take their course, without either seeking or avoiding an explanation.

Although Captain and Mrs Malcolm were not so Utopian as to attempt to bring up their children in utter ignorance of the wickedness of the world in general, still less were they given to point out particular living instances of it, as they found quite enough on record to serve their purpose, without applying the scalpel to the characters of all their acquaintances. Glenroy's behaviour, therefore, called forth no animadversions from them in presence of their family. They knew that reason, and the improvement

of the understanding, nay religion itself, are often insufficient to destroy prejudices imbibed in early life, and that children cannot possibly discriminate or comprehend the vast variety of shades which are to be found in the same character. With them every thing, and every body, is either good or bad, and, of course, either loved or hated, with all the ardour of unregulated minds. They were, therefore, unwilling to impress their young hearts with feelings of enmity and aversion against one, who, with all his pride, vanity, and littleness of mind, nevertheless possessed claims upon their forbearance and goodwill.

Some childish disorder which showed itself in the family, soon afforded a plausible excuse for the continued estrangement, and Captain Malcolm trusted, that by the time that was over, the Chieftain's disappointment would be somewhat mollified. And so it gradually was, in some degree, although, for want of something better or worse to say, he had got into the habit of regularly abusing the whole family at least five times a-day, unless otherwise engaged.

Such was the state of affairs when Captain Malcolm received a letter from Captain Stanley, offering to take Ronald on board his own vessel, the Brilliant, then under orders for North America. The commander and the voyage were both unexceptionable; but Captain and Mrs Malcolm, who had never been very desirous of their son's entering on a sea-faring life—a life of such hardship and danger—were now decidedly averse to it, when, by the change of circumstances, a profession had become a very secondary consideration. But in vain they endeavoured to combat this inclination. Ronald had conceived that strange and unaccountable predilection for the sea, which, like all extraordinary propensities, when once it has taken possession of the mind, is not to be expelled by any thing short of dear-bought experience. He said, indeed, that he would give it up rather than distress his father and mother; but he said it with sorrow, and the disappointment hung so heavily on his spirits, that his parents thought it wrong to oppose so decided a predilection, and the point was yielded. They gave their

consent, not without hope that a single voyage would do more to cure him of his naval ardour, than all that could be urged against it. Preparations were therefore immediately made for his departure; but he said, before he went away, he must go to Glenroy to give Edith her starling, and to take leave of them all. They had been very shy of late. He did not know what was the matter, but he would go and see them, and make it up whatever it was. And full of kind feelings, Ronald set forth.

At a little distance from the house he met the two boys and Edith at play upon the lawn, and his heart bounded at sight of them. He accosted them with all his wonted gladness and frankness of manner, but the boys reddened and looked at each other, while Edith cast down her eyes and looked sorry. If children are sometimes slow to speak the truth, they are commonly quick to show it in their behaviour. The tongue seems in childhood the only member which can yield a ready assent to falsehood. The kindling or downcast eye—the blushing cheek—the constrained air—all speak the feelings of the heart, and 'tis

long ere the ingenuous mind is tutored to regulate and control them.

The young party met Ronald's salutation with cold averted looks, unlike the familiarity of their usual manners.

"You look as if you did not know me," said Ronald, with some surprise, as his friendly greeting met with no return; "although it is a long while since we have met, surely you cannot have forgotten me?"

"O, no!—we have not forgot you," said Master Norman, scornfully.

"Then, why don't you speak to me, and shake hands with me?"

No answer was returned.

"And why do none of you come to Lochdhu? You need have no fears of the measles now, for the little ones have been quite well for more than a month; and——"

"It isn't for that," said Reginald, haughtily; "but it's of no use to ask any questions, we don't choose to answer them, and that's enough. So, good-morning to you."

"No!" cried Ronald, in some agitation.

"I won't go till you have told me why you are not friends with me. I'm sure I never did any of you any ill?"

"You have, though," reiterated Norman, passionately; "and papa says we are never to speak——"

"Hush, Norman!" said Edith, putting her hand on his lips, and whispering softly, "You know papa told us we were not to repeat any thing he said; and I'm sure he would not be angry if we were to bid Ronald good-by."

"I wish you would tell me what it is I have done, that has made you quarrel with me; for I'm sure I don't know," said Ronald, in vain trying to recall any offence he had committed.

"We shall perhaps *make* you know some day," said Norman.

"The sooner the better," said Ronald, boldly; "for I am going away."

"Where are you going?"

"To sea."

"And what have you got in your hand?"

"It is Edith's starling," said Ronald, displaying his captive.

Curiosity got the better of pride. Edith uttered an exclamation of pleasure, and the boys drew near, with looks of eager expectation.

"Can it speak, Ronald?" cried she, in a flutter of delight, and quite forgetting her reserve. Ronald answered by opening the little cage he held in his hand, when the bird flew out and perched upon his wrist, jabbering something, which he said was, "Forget me not!" but which rather puzzled the uninitiated, and certainly was not so plain as the "Can't get out," of Sterne's sentimental starling.

Such as it was, it was a novelty, and consequently hailed with eagerness by the young group, who, one and all, for the moment forgot their animosity.

"Give it to me—make it come to me—let me have it," cried all three at once, eagerly extending their hands to it.

"You are frightening it," cried Ronald, raising his arm to save the starling from its assailants.

"Well, but I won't frighten it," cried the

two boys, again attempting to get hold of it. "Give it to me—give it to me!"

"No, no, I won't give it to either of you. It is Edith's bird, and I will give it to nobody but her."

"If it is Edith's bird, why don't you give it to her?" cried Reginald.

"Well, stand away both of you," said Ronald, "for it is frightened. It is rather wild yet to strangers; but see how it stays with Edith!"

"Now, Edith, give it to me!" cried Reginald, darting forward to seize it; but Ronald hastily stretching out his arm to ward him off, the shock threw him back, and his head striking against the branch of a tree, he fell, and the blood sprung from his nostrils.

Edith screamed, while Norman sought to stanch the blood with his handkerchief, and Ronald flew away for some water, which he brought in his cap.

"I am very sorry for this, Reginald," said he, as he returned breathless with haste. "Here is some water—drink a little of it—it will do you good."

But Reginald pushed away his hand with indignation.

"I'm sure I didn't intend to hurt you, Reginald," said he, earnestly; "I was only trying to save the starling from you."

"You had no business to keep it from me," said Reginald, passionately. "You had given it to Edith, and she had promised it to me, and you ought to have been very proud of our touching your bird, or any thing belonging to you."

"Proud!" repeated Ronald.

"Yes, *very* proud," added Norman; "but we shall not demean ourselves any more, so you may take away your ugly stupid starling. Edith is not to take it."

"Edith is not to be dictated to," said Ronald warmly; "she is to do as she likes, and I know very well that she would like to have the starling. Would you not, Edith?"

"Edith, I shall never speak to you if you take his bird," cried Reginald; "so take your choice."

Edith, with tears in her eyes, looked imploringly at her tyrants, and then at the starling.

"You are not to take his bird, I tell you,

Edith," cried Norman, in a passion. "It will tell lies, and cheat."

"What do you mean?" cried Ronald, kindling. "Do you mean to say I tell lies, and cheat? Whoever says so is a liar, and if either of you were as strong as I am, you durst not say so; but you know I won't fight with a less boy than myself."

"If you hadn't given me this cowardly blow," said Reginald, "I should have fought you on the spot, and so I will yet some day."

"I did not intend to strike you," said Ronald. "I told you I was sorry for it. I didn't come here to fight you: I came to be friends with you all, and to shake hands with you before I go away; but if you are determined not to do it, I can't help it."

The boys looked a little ashamed, and walked sullenly on, while Edith lingered, and cast many a loving look to her starling.

"I shall carry home the bird for you, Edith," said Ronald, "and give it to you there, and Mrs Macauley will take care of it for you; at least, *you* will part friends with me, won't you?"

and Edith, with downcast eyes, uttered a faint affirmative. The party walked on in silence till they reached the castle, when Ronald said, "Here is your starling, Edith; take it, and let us be friends before I go."

Edith looked with soft earnest eyes, as if she longed to be reconciled, and her hand was extended, when Reginald interposed.

"You must choose, then, between him and me," said he, passionately. "I shall never speak to you if you are friends with him."

If Edith had followed the dictates of her heart, she would most probably have chosen the unvarying, kind, generous, protecting friendship of Ronald, to the somewhat capricious, and often tyrannical, preference of Reginald; but, too timid and gentle to dare to have a will of her own, she trembled at the thoughts of even betraying her good-will towards him, for fear of the displeasure it would draw down upon her. Thus early is "the fear of man a snare" for the young heart.

"I cannot take it, Ronald," said she, bursting into tears; and all three walked into the house,

and shut the door in Ronald's face. Ronald felt both anger and sorrow at such unkind behaviour, and, deeply mortified at Edith's joining against him, in a paroxysm of disappointment he tossed up the starling in the air. "There," cried he, "you may go; since Edith won't have you, no one else shall;" and in bitterness of heart, he retraced his way to his own kindly home.

It may be supposed what a sight and a story this was for Glenroy; his children all dabbled over with blood—the noble blood of his nephew shed by the plebeian hand of the tacksman's son —his own blood boiled to think of it! Dire were the anathemas uttered against the perpetrator of this outrage; and, though not naturally a sanguinary man, yet, had the power of former days been in his own hands, there is no saying in what manner he might have thought proper to avenge this indignity. Most likely in the Rob Roy strain—

> "And to his sword he would have said,
> Do thou my sovereign will enact;
> * * * * *
> Judge thou of law and fact."

But after Reginald's face had been washed with vinegar, and his dress changed, there appeared no injury to redress. The traces of it did not, however, pass so easily from Glenroy's mind; he was never weary of detailing and denouncing the exaggerated statement of Ronald's enormities, till his name became a by-word and reproach throughout the family.

CHAPTER XXVI.

But Ronald was soon to be beyond the reach of Glenroy's contumely, for the day and hour of his departure had arrived. The parting hour! that hour, which, even in all its bitterness, we would yet fondly prolong, and when past, would many times gladly—oh! how gladly recall! There is something peculiarly affecting in the first separation that takes place in a family, which, amidst many difficulties and privations, has ever preserved in its own bosom the elements of happiness—of sweet domestic happiness; those precious elements, which, once scattered, are so seldom, if ever, united again!

"My home of youth! oh, if indeed to part
With the soul's loved one be a mournful thing,
When we go forth in buoyancy of heart,
And bearing all the glories of the spring

For life to breathe on—is it less to meet
When these are faded? who shall call it sweet?
Even though love's mingling tears may haply bring
Balm as they fall, too well their heavy showers
Teach us how much is lost of all that once was ours."*

Yes; search as we will, let us ransack east and west, earth and sea, for their peculiar treasures; it is not these, even in their fullest attainment, that bring joy to the heart, which can only find its happiness in the exercise of its best affections; and which, when it survives these, lives but to sigh over its withered hopes, its buried love. Alas! if in the long and dreary interval of separation, it were foreseen what griefs were to be borne, what ties were to be severed, what hearts were to be seared or broken; who of woman born could bear the sight and live? But 'tis in mercy these things are hidden from our eyes!

No foreboding of evil greater than the present filled the hearts of the sorrowing family, who were now assembled to part with him who was

* Felicia Hemans.

the loved one of all; for his parents' hearts were strong in faith in that Almighty Power, in the shadow of whose wings there is safety for all who put their trust in Him. They knew that it was not in an arm of flesh to save, when the decree had gone forth to smite; for they had seen—as who has not?—the child of a thousand cares, the hope of some noble house, the heir of some mighty name—the only, the all, the idolized one—whose pillow had been a mother's heart, whose safeguard a father's arms, smitten even when pressed to their hearts, and torn from their unavailing grasp by the stern hand of Death;—while the wet sea-boy, whose cradle had been the waves, who had been buffeted by the stormy winds, and tossed on the raging billows, with none to watch over him, none to care for him, had been upheld and preserved by Him whose "way is in the sea," and whose "path is in the great waters," and in whose "hands are the issues of life and of death."

It was this heavenly confidence which gave fortitude to the father, and resignation to the

mother, as they blessed again and again the object of their love and their prayers, and gazed upon the treasured features, dimmed as they were by their parting tears. Years might pass away before they should behold them again, but the remembrance of them, they felt would never pass away till the last hours of life.

But different from the calm and holy sorrow of the parents, are the feelings of the young and imaginative upon these solemn occasions. Amidst *their* grief there is still a spirit of joy within them, and their hearts beat high with fond anticipations of a world their fancy has pictured so fair, and which is fraught to them with all, with more than all the world ever gave, or has to give.

And what though there be error and exaggeration in their romantic dreams? And what though dangers and disappointments are sure to quell their towering hopes of youthful enthusiasm? The delusion springs from a lofty source, from which all that is great in thought, and noble in action, has its rise; from those aspira-

tions after a higher destiny than that of mere every day existence, which seem inherent in minds of noble stamp, and

"Speak their high descent and glorious end."

Such were the feelings of young Ronald, as the pictured joys of a sailor's life dwelt upon his imagination, and braced his heart to leave all those beloved most dearly. The stately ship—the swelling sails—the dashing waves—the freshening breeze—the unknown lands—the excitement—the perils—the renown—over all these his ardent spirit had cast a charm which he longed to realize. Yet when the time came, still he lingered amidst the encircling arms and the linked hands, and the fond tones, and the tears, and the kisses and mutual promises, *not to forget.* But last and longest did he remain locked in his mother's arms, that mother so loved—so adored—must he then leave her?

It was a mighty effort to break away from all he had ever known and loved—the tender parents—the happy playmates—the dear familiar faces, and scenes which had stamped the

first impressions on his heart. His very dog—his faithful Bran—how his long mournful howl rung in his ear as the boat put off from land, and he was left! For the moment, Ronald's bright prospects all melted away beneath the warm gush of tender affection, as he thought, "Why have I left them? I might have staid, and now, perhaps, I may never see them more!" But the day was one to chase all sadness from the heart; the blue waters glittered in sunshine; a summer breeze filled the sails of the little boat, which skimmed along like a thing of life, and other and fairer scenes soon met Ronald's eye, than those of his mountain home and native shores.

CHAPTER XXVII.

By the succession of his son, and his own eventual inheritance, Captain Malcolm was now in a different situation from what he had hitherto been, as the proprietor of a small farm, and the tenant of his proud Chief. But although he met with all that deference and attention which ever waits upon worldly prosperity, there was no alteration in his simple habits and demeanour, to the surprise of those selfish, sordid spirits, who look upon wealth as the *summum bonum* of human felicity. Whether Mr M'Dow was of the number, we do not pretend to say; but at this time the following letter arrived from him:

"My dear Sir,

"The preparations for the departure of your son, and the consequent bustle and confusion

which such an event unavoidably creates in a family, prevented my having the honour of communicating with you sooner upon a subject of an extremely delicate and most interesting nature. From the various small attentions I have for some time past been in the practice of paying to your eldest daughter, Miss Lucy, I have no doubt you will be pretty fully prepared for the communication I am about to make to you, looking upon this mode of proceeding as by far the most honourable and manly on such an occasion. From the first period of my entering on the ministry, it was my firm determination to embrace the earliest opportunity of entering into the married state, not only as being most conducive to my own comfort and respectability, but as what the world would naturally expect from me, when placed in independent circumstances, and in an elevated station in society. I was very soon captivated with the modesty, good temper, beauty, and accomplishments of your daughter; but the difficulties which I found myself involved in, in consequence of having to raise a summons for augmentation, together with

the uncertainty as to the final result of my reclaiming petition, made me at once resolve to act as became a man of honour and integrity, by refraining from paying my addresses until such time as I should have obtained a final decreet. I have now the pleasure of informing you, that by last night's post I received the agreeable intelligence that the Court has found me entitled to my augmentation, and also decern for a small addition to the manse, and thorough repairs to my offices, which, although not what I by any means think myself entitled to, yet, upon the whole, will make things pretty decent. That being the case, there no longer remains any necessity for my concealing the attachment I have for a considerable time entertained for your daughter, and for soliciting her hand in marriage. From what I have observed, I think I have every reason to flatter myself with a favourable response from her, although, in justice to myself, I must again assure you, that I have made no direct appeal to her affections, but such as you have been privy to. With regard to my family connexions and private for-

tune, I beg leave to subjoin the following statement for the satisfaction of yourself and Mrs Malcolm.

"My father, as is well known, was for upwards of forty years schoolmaster on the mortification of Myreside, and although the emoluments were not at that time what they are now, still they were such as enabled him to live like a gentleman, and to cut a good figure in the world. I need scarcely add, that he was a man of a most highly respectable character, and of uncommon learning and abilities, in fact, quite a superior man; he was nearly related to the great M'Dow of M'Dow. At the same time he set no great value upon these things himself, and for my own part I am no genealogist either, and have never given myself any trouble to prove the antiquity of my family. With respect to my fortune, I have not been much in the way of amassing wealth, but what I have is vested in the three per cent consols, and amounts to something upwards of £200. I have likewise two substantial top flats in the Gallowgate, Glasgow, one of which my mother liferents; the other I let off for £16 per

annum. I am far from expecting, my dear sir, that, with your numerous family, you should be able to afford splendid fortunes to your children; at the same time, as your prospects, my dear sir, are very materially improved, I have no doubt you will at once see the propriety of doing all that lies in your power to enable your daughter to cut a good figure in the world as my wife. But as it is well known that money has never been the principal object with me, I think I may safely trust to your own good sense and liberality, and gentlemanly conduct, for a suitable and genteel portion with your daughter. On my part, I am willing to make such settlements as may be deemed just and reasonable on my wife, who, in addition, will, in the event of surviving me, be entitled to £30 per annum from the Widows' Scheme.* I beg the favour of an acknowledgment of this per bearer, and I hope I may be permitted the honour of waiting on the ladies in the course of to-morrow forenoon; in

* In English, a matrimonial design; in Scotch, a pecuniary compensation.

the meantime I request you will do me the favour to deliver my respectful compliments to them, with my most special devoirs to Miss Lucy, and with the utmost regard,

I am, my dear Sir,
Your most faithful humble servant,
DUN. M'DOW.

" P. S. For your farther satisfaction, I think it proper to hand you over a sight of the testimonials of my character, which, in justice to myself, I thought it necessary to procure at the time when I was applying for the presentation.
D. M'D."

The " Testimonials" were, as usual, such as might have entitled the *testified* to the honours of an apotheosis, and the eulogy uttered by Mark Antony over the dead body of Julius Cæsar, would have sounded tame and cold in comparison of the panegyrics lavished on Mr M'Dow to his own face. From a voluminous mass of evidence, the following may serve as a slight specimen.

" My dear Sir,

" It is with the most unfeigned satisfaction I take up my pen to bear my public testimony to worth such as yours, enriched and adorned as it is with abilities of the first order—polished and refined by all that learning can bestow. From the early period at which our friendship commenced, few, I flatter myself, can boast of a more intimate acquaintance with you than myself; but such is the retiring modesty of your nature, that I fear, were I to express the high sense I entertain of your merit, I might wound that delicacy which is so prominent a feature in your character. I shall therefore merely affirm, that your talents I consider as of the very highest order; your learning and erudition are deep, various, and profound; while your scholastic researches have ever been conducted on the broad basis of Christian moderation and gentlemanly liberality. Your doctrines I look upon as of the most sound practical description, calculated to superinduce the clearest and most comprehensive system of Christian morals, to which

your own character and conduct afford an apt illustration. As a preacher, your language is nervous, copious, and highly rhetorical; your action in the pulpit free, easy, and graceful. As a companion, your colloquial powers are of no ordinary description, while the dignity of your manners, combined with the suavity of your address, render your company universally sought after in the very first society. In short, to sum up the whole, I know no man more likely than yourself to adorn the gospel, both by your precept and example. With the utmost esteem and respect,

"I am, dear Sir,

"Most faithfully and sincerely yours."

RODERICK M'CRAW,

Professor of Belles Lettres.

But Lucy was not dazzled either by the Testimonials, or the Decreet, or the Augmentation, or the flats in the Gallowgate, or the Widows' Scheme; and, to Mr M'Dow's astonishment and indignation, a polite, though peremptory refusal was returned to his modest proposals.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LIFE seemed to be now holding its most even tenor both at the castle and the farm, for both showed so little variety beyond the most common casualties, that for some time not a single occurrence in either family would have served to adorn a tale, scarcely even to point a moral. The Chief, although his rancour was gradually abating, still preserved a stately distance towards his kinsman; and as their habits and pursuits were quite opposite, they seldom came in contact with each other. Glenroy, in spite of the downfall of his hopes, still pursued his course of revelry and reckless profusion, while Captain Malcolm, undazzled by the glare of future wealth and consequence, continued his former simple, frugal mode of life; his chief aim being

to render his children happy, virtuous, and independent.

But the blank Ronald had left in the domestic circle remained a dreary chasm for many a dull day and long night; for Ronald had been the beloved of all, and all missed him, from the eldest to the youngest. The accounts that had hitherto been received, both of and from him, had been highly satisfactory. His captain and he were mutually pleased with each other, and the young sailor's naval ardour had suffered no diminution during the time the ship had remained at the Nore, after he had joined. But soon after that, its destination had been changed, and instead of being dispatched, as was originally intended, on a six weeks voyage to a healthy climate, it had been ordered to cruize in distant seas, and in another hemisphere. This was a disappointment to Captain and Mrs Malcolm, and an aggravation to the anxiety they naturally experienced on their boy's account—an anxiety which, even under the influence of pious trust, could not fail to be felt by fond parents for a son of such promise. Their hearts were indeed occasionally cheered

by letters from both Ronald and his captain, when they happened to hail a ship in their progress, and the contents were always of a gratifying nature. Captain Stanley was delighted with Ronald, and Ronald was delighted with the sea, and said he would not exchange his hammock for all Inch Orran. All he wanted was to witness a battle and a storm, and when he had seen these, he should be satisfied. "Heaven forbid his wishes should be soon gratified!" said his mother, as she read the young enthusiast's letter; but it seemed as if Heaven, in its mysterious decrees, had otherwise ordained.

Many months passed after this, without either letters or tidings, and the anxiety of the parents became gradually more intense. Winter days and stormy nights, and summer suns rolled on, and still all was silence. To the watchfulness of expectation now succeeded the feverishness of apprehension, and then came that awful stillness, the oppressive weight of time which we have loaded with our own dread presentiments. When all nature seems to be wrapt in silence and in gloom—when every object appears to pro-

claim the downfall of our hopes—when the gayest scenes only move us to tears—when the gladdest tones only sound as the death-knell of our happiness. Oh! many were the midnight prayers breathed from a sleepless pillow wet with a mother's tears, and duly were the streaming eyes and supplicating hands raised to Heaven, while "Thy will be done!" yet trembled on the lip. In vain the anguished parents strove to hide from each other the dismal forebodings which filled their souls. The averted look, the stifled sigh, the listless step, the sudden start, the vacant yet searching eye, all betrayed the secret of those hearts which for the first time were closed against each other. At length the bolt fell, and by one stroke these hearts were laid bare. The ship had foundered, and every soul on board had perished! A plank, on which were a few letters of her name, and a shattered boat, had been picked up, and all was told. In the ocean depths all had gone down, and many a wave since then had dashed over the trackless spot where lay the young, the brave, the loved—their tale a secret

till that day when the seas shall give up their dead.

> " Oh ! were her tale of sorrow know
> 'Twere something to the breaking heart,
> The pang of doubt would then be gone,
> And Fancy's endless dreams depart.
> It may not be!—there is no ray
> By which her doom we may explore;
> We only know she sail'd away,
> And ne'er was seen, nor heard of more !"

Ah ! who can tell the anguish of a parent's heart sorrowing for the loss of their child ? He only to whom all hearts are open, and who, remembering we are clay, forbids not those fond and mournful recollections with which we invest the perished form of the object of our love. Alas ! how does our startled fancy recoil from the first dread thought, and seek to cheat itself, by conjuring up, and enthroning anew, that image in our hearts which our reason sternly tells us is no more. No more ! the being all life, and motion, and strength, and beauty, whom we have so lately held to our breasts—whose voice even now sounds as sweetest music in our ear—in whose eyes we were wont to read

as in a book—whose vacant seat still stands before us—whose thousand mementos lie scattered around us—is that being indeed gone from the face of this bright earth for ever? Still—still would we seek the living among the dead! In vain does human sympathy seek to pour its oil on the dark and troubled waters of affliction. 'Tis a hand divine can alone stem the torrent which overflows our soul—'tis a voice from heaven alone that can speak peace to our stricken hearts, when it tells us the dust we so loved on earth, whether it be scattered o'er the trackless desert, or be buried in the dark and fathomless abysses of the ocean, He will again build up in immortal beauty, and restore to that divine inheritance, where there is no more sorrow or death. Oh, blessed are they, who, even in the anguish of their spirits, can bring their fainting hearts to His footstool, and there, with meek submission, say, "Not my will, but thine be done." With such, "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

CHAPTER XXIX.

In the affliction of the bereaved family, it would have been no small comfort to them to have been visited occasionally by a faithful and spiritual-minded pastor, one who could have soothed their downcast spirits, and have strengthened their religious faith, and have recalled to their startled minds those cheering promises, which, in the first moments of anguish, are so apt, even by the best, to be forgotten, or but faintly remembered. But it was not in the house of mourning that Mr M'Dow's presence was wont to shine. He called indeed, but he saw only Captain Malcolm—"Sorrow is a sacred thing," not to be subjected to the common eye, and Mrs Malcolm and Lucy felt as though the presence of Mr M'Dow would only have

profaned the memory of the departed, and harrowed up the feelings of the living. Sorrow had indeed sunk deep into the soul of the bereft mother. Ronald had been unconsciously the idol of her affections, and in the anguish of losing him, she felt that he had been the dearest to her, of all her children. She bowed, indeed, with meek submission to the will of Heaven, but the elasticity of her mind seemed gone. All was calm and resigned, but it was the calm of deep suffering, the resignation of a silenced heart. Often in the dead of night there seemed to break upon her startled ear the sound of the raging sea, and the tempestuous winds, and the cry—the piercing cry, of her drowning boy; and then to wake to silence and sad conviction that all was not a dream! But prayer would again bring down its holy calm to the troubled mind, and the pious mourner would meekly confess that it was good for her to be thus brought, even by the hand of sorrow, to the throne of grace. It was at this time that a visit from the good Mr Stuart came to cheer and invigorate her drooping spirit.

He was a man whose whole appearance and

deportment were so emblematic of the sanctity of his character, that even a child would have felt that there was a holy man. He was of a pale thoughtful cast of countenance, but his thoughts were evidently such as savoured more of heavenly things than low-born cares, for its expression was at once elevated and benign. He

"Bore his great commission in his look,"

and the sense of that sacred trust gave a certain dignified humility to the apostolic simplicity of his demeanour.

It is difficult to describe a piety so consistent in all its parts, and so unvarying in its practice, which sheds a living unction over the whole character, whose influence is deeply felt in the daily intercourse of life, but whose results do not dazzle by any sudden or powerful impression. Human life, indeed, is composed of such an unceasing succession of minute occurrences, and humble duties, and undignified occupations, that it would seem tedious and trivial to narrate the course of even a good man's one well spent day; but, as some one has well observed, it is fidelity

in the aggregate of these little things that forms the true solidity and greatness of the Christian character. Even so it was with the venerable pastor of Auchnagoil. Grandeur, worldly grandeur, would have heard with a disdainful smile the simple annals of his obscure life; but how much of moral grandeur was there in the self-immolation of his Christian course; a course at once humble and sublime! He was indeed a "living sermon" of the truths he taught, and to inculcate these truths by precept and example, was the sole aim of his consecrated office. To succour the distressed, to minister to the sick, to help the poor, to comfort the mourner, to cheer the penitent, to reclaim the wanderer—for this he laboured in the far-extended district which his parish contained; for this he visited the distant village and the lonely hut, seeking out each individual of his widely-scattered flock; for this he braved the winter's flood and summer's heat; for this he crossed many a rough and tempestuous ferry, and climbed many a rugged and dreary mountain, and traversed many an unfrequented glen.

" Yet would not grace one spark of pride allow,
Or cry, ' Stand off, I'm holier far than thou !' "

For he was no wild enthusiast, nor narrow-minded sectarian, nor hot-headed zealot; but he was a man, plain, artless, and simple in deed and word: his highest gifts meekness, temperance, patience, faith, and love, and the highest words wherein he taught them were words from the Book of God.

But though Mr Stuart's character was thus fair and consistent in the eyes of others, in his own estimation how differently did he view it! " Unworthy and unprofitable servant that I am," he would exclaim to himself, " how mixed are all my motives! How selfish are my best intentions! How polluted my purest affections! How deficient are my best works! But thou hast told the weary troubled soul to come unto thee, and thou wilt give it peace:" peace, how different and how superior to the outward satisfaction of the vain, self-satisfied, worldly mind!

Such are the feelings of the true Christian. His warfare is within, and in proportion as he

is enabled by the eye of faith to discern the holiness and purity of God, so shall he also perceive the guilt and frailty of his own imperfect nature.

He spoke, and his words came like balm to the wounded hearts of the sorrowing parents, for they came fraught with cheering promises, and glorious hopes, of eternal life. He bade them turn their thoughts from the contemplation of that on which, at such a time, our thoughts, alas! are too prone to dwell, even the material part of that immortal being once so precious in our sight.

He had known Ronald, and he knew the good seed that had been sown in his young heart, and felt convinced that in the hour of peril that would not have failed him.

"I am far from saying that you ought not to weep for him you have lost," said the good pastor, while his own eyes were moistened with sorrow. "Such a state, even if attainable, would be far from desirable; it would defeat the purpose for which God hath been pleased to bestow upon us

warm and kindly affections. We know that afflictions are sent not as punishments, but as messengers of love to lead us unto Him."

"I feel it is so," said Mrs Malcolm, meekly; "but still, my rebellious heart——" She stopped, but struggling to overcome her emotion, added, "Alas! I often think, had my boy but died in my arms, I could have yielded him up with less reluctance to the will of God. I feel as if I could then have said with greater sincerity than I fear I do now, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

"That is a natural feeling," said Mr Stuart; "the horrors of death always come aggravated to our minds, when accompanied, as in this case, with any thing of suddenness or mystery; we are then apt to imagine it more dreadful than any reality, forgetting that 'the Lord is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the waves of the sea.' True, 'the silver cord is loosened, and the golden bowl is broken,' and the dust has returned to the dust, but the spirit

has also returned to God who gave it. What matters it then *how* we enter on the valley of the shadow of death, when we know we are to pass through it by the light of those Divine footsteps which have trod it before us? They still remain, and will remain till time shall be no more, to guide us to our heavenly home, where this 'corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall be clothed with immortality;' where we shall enter on 'glory such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive.'"

"With such glorious prospects of perfect and endless felicity at the end of the Christian course," said Captain Malcolm, "it indeed matters little whether we enter upon them by lingering decay, or by a stroke of the sword, or the shock of a wave; whichever it is, we must believe that it is the means our Heavenly Father deemed the best; and in that belief let us humbly acquiesce."

"And in that simple act of acquiescence we shall feel a sure and certain rest for our souls," said Mr Stuart. Time, it has been truly said, indeed obliterates sorrow from the worldly

heart, and leaves it no better than it found it; but Religion beautifies and sanctifies affliction in the heart of the Christian, and causes it even to bring forth new and more abundant graces; the fountain of bitter water may yet become the well of living water springing up to everlasting life."

"Feeling and acknowledging as I do the truth of these things," said Mrs Malcolm, "how weak, how sinful it seems to allow my soul to be thus cast down! I know the conditions on which every blessing is bestowed—that we must one day part with it—and I believe that God knows best when that parting should be; and yet," she added, while the tears flowed silently down her cheek, "my son! my son!"

"Do not judge yourself thus strictly," said the good pastor; "you do not mourn as those who have no hope; the spirit is willing to believe all things, though the flesh is weak to endure them. You believe that God *gives* in love, believe that he also *takes* in love, and your heart will not be troubled beyond measure; for 'light is sown for the righteous, and gladness

for the upright in heart;' be of good courage then, for God's promise is not made in vain; 'they who sow in tears shall reap in joy.'"

Such, though imperfectly detailed, was the tenor of the faithful minister's conversation with the afflicted parents; and he left them soothed by his visit, and cheered by the promise of repeating it as often as his wanderings brought him near their dwelling.

Perhaps the first pleasurable emotions of an outward kind, to which the bereaved heart is awakened, are to be found in the deep and simple enjoyment of the beauties of nature. And where to the reflective mind and cultivated taste are not these beauties to be found? Even on the barren mountain and the dreary moor, on the ever-flowing waters, and the ever-changing clouds,

> "No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
> No waste so vacant, but may well employ
> Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
> Awake to love and beauty!"

To those whose eyes and hearts have long been closed, whether by sickness or sorrow, but are

again opened to the soothing influence and gentle harmony of nature,

> " The meanest floweret of the vale,
> The simplest note that swells the gale,
> The common earth, the air, the skies,"

are indeed to them " as opening paradise," and insensibly they " feel that they are happier than they know."

CHAPTER XXX.

WHILE the mansion of Lochdhu was thus darkened by the shadow of death, we may turn to the habitation of Glenroy, which was basking in the full blaze of prosperity. Ronald's mournful fate, however, had not failed to excite its due share of sorrow and of sympathy. Even the Chief's animosity had been greatly softened, and the two boys remembered with shame and compunction their unkind treatment of him at their last meeting; while Edith shed many a tear of remorse and regret over the memory of the loved companion of her childhood. She was again permitted to renew her intimacy with the family at Inch Orran, and her affectionate heart felt as though its only reparation could be in devoting herself to the consolation of the mourners.

Years rolled on, and the young people either

gradually outgrew their childish faults, or exchanged them—as is often the case—for others less obvious to common perception; but so it was, the spoiled, forward, petulant boys, were now transformed into handsome, spirited, pleasing youths, the pride and delight of the Chieftain—the admired and applauded of all his friends and followers. Not that Norman possessed any distinguishing traits of excellence in himself, for he inherited much of his father's character, along with his features. He was proud, overbearing, and selfish, but he was handsome, light-hearted, active, and brave, which, with his figure and fortune, were requisites sufficient to ensure his popularity as a future Chief. Had it been possible for him to have been eclipsed in his father's eyes or house, he certainly would have been so, by his cousin Reginald, who was a perfect model of manly beauty, and seemed in his person to have realized all that Grecian sculpture had imagined of faultless form and feature. The materials of his mind and character seemed also of a richer and nobler stamp than Norman's. He had good feelings, great sensibility, an ar-

dent, romantic imagination, and a high-spirited scorn of every thing mean and base; and although he was at the same time headstrong, self-willed, and impetuous, the slave of impulse, and the sport of passion, yet, as his impulse often led him to what was good, and his passion was a mere gust, these in early life showed scarcely as defects, but seemed merely the natural exuberance of youthful blood and unchecked spirits. The seeds of many good qualities had been sown in him by nature, but not much had been done by education to bring them to maturity; the tares had been suffered to grow up with the wheat, and both were now so completely blended together, that it would have required no common skill and pains to have distinguished and separated them. The attempt, however, had not been made, and which should predominate, would depend upon the circumstances in which he might be placed, and the temptations to which he might be exposed. Hitherto, nothing had occurred to call forth any of the latent feelings of the heart, or proclaim the master-passion of the soul, for his life had merely been that of an

indulged and pampered boy, who had never known a trial, or had a wish ungratified. So bright and sunny an existence, then, could scarcely fail to produce a pleasing influence on the naturally good temper and high spirits, as the soil will be richest in gay flowers where the harrow has never entered. But,

> ——— " not only by the warmth
> And soothing sunshine of delightful things,
> Do minds grow up and flourish."

Alas! who has ever beheld the endowments of nature, and the advantages of fortune, realize in the happiness of their possessor, the splendid visions they seemed destined to fulfil?

Mr Ellis had frequently urged on Glenroy the propriety of sending the young men to finish their studies at an English University; but his remonstrances were always answered by a quotation from Dr Johnson, the only one the Chief had ever burdened his memory with, that " an English education could only tame a Highland Chieftain into insignificance." — " And,

sir, my son shall not be tamed into insignificance at any of your English Universities."

Mr Ellis was therefore obliged to give up the point; and having written on the subject to Sir Angus, he only waited to receive his instructions as to the future plans to be adopted for the completing of Reginald's education before he took leave of his pupils, and relinquished what was now a mere nominal office—that of their preceptor.

Glenroy liked his daughter as well as he could like any thing incapable of holding or transmitting the chieftainship, yet still she was rather an insignificant person in his estimation. He was, however, pleased to hear on all hands, that Edith was reckoned the prettiest girl in the county, and that Reginald and she had already formed an attachment to each other; as that was at once securing a good establishment for her, and saving himself all trouble as to her future disposal. Although it has been said, the love which grows by degrees is more nearly allied to friendship than to passion, nevertheless the attachment of the cousins seemed to form an exception

to this general rule, for *their* love had continued to grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength.

As the attachment was sanctioned by both sides of the house, the course of their love, contrary to that of all other loves, seemed destined to run in a very smooth channel, and it was already settled that the marriage should take place upon Reginald's attaining the age of twenty-one. No envious cloud, therefore, marred the brightness of their horizon; they stood on "the threshold of life," and all life's fairest prospects lay spread out before them.

A too strict similarity of character, is perhaps not favourable either to love or friendship, and the difference of dispositions in the young lovers seemed only such as would give greater charm to their attachment. Reginald was all fire and impetuosity, while Edith was all gentleness and timidity. With her father and brother, she found little congeniality of mind, or interchange of sentiment, for their characters were cast in a different mould from hers; but there was much of a kindred nature in the more romantic and

imaginative mind of her cousin, and she loved him with her whole heart, as the only being with whom she could hold unreserved communion. Possessed of deep sensibility, and dwelling with the object of her earliest affection amid scenes of grandeur and beauty, calculated to call forth and nourish all that was romantic and tender in her nature, it was not surprising that Edith should yield to the dominion of an artless affection, unsullied by the tarnish of the world, and live in a creation of her own. Outwardly calm and serene, all the powers of her mind were concentrated in those feelings, which, hidden from the common eye, had entwined themselves with every fibre of her heart, and choked each plant of humble, wholesome, influence.

Her mind, though sensitive and feminine, was naturally strong, but it was relaxed and enfeebled, from the constant habit of looking to Reginald as the ruler and arbiter of her very thoughts. The materials of excellence and happiness had been largely bestowed upon her, but she was ignorant of their value, and confided them wholly to the keeping of another. It was

to Reginald she looked for her daily portion of happiness; it was in his heart she anchored her trust, and there sought her abiding place of rest and refuge.

CHAPTER XXXI.

One of the many gifts Mrs Macauley had received from nature, was her faculty of dreaming, which she piqued herself upon in no small degree; and although it never had been productive of any good either to herself or others, yet she nevertheless entertained the utmost respect and veneration for this endowment, and placed the most perfect reliance on her own oracles.

Glenroy, of course, affected to treat her dreams and visions as he did herself, with great contempt, but secretly he had rather a relish for them, especially as Mrs Macauley was not a public dreamer; her dreams always related to his house and family, and there was therefore a sort of importance annexed to the idea of having his own peculiar dreamer in his household. It was a piece of state almost equal to that of keep-

ing a dwarf, or a fool, or a henchman, or a piper, or any other of those prerogatives of grandeur.

The natural contempt, however, which is felt in this enlightened age for old wives' dreams, and even for young women's fables, together with the profound respect we entertain for the understanding of our readers, withholds us from relating, upon this occasion, the cabalistic narrative with which Mrs Macauley one morning regaled the breakfast table; suffice it to say, it was all a dream should, or could be. It was grand, confused, dark, incoherent, contradictory, senseless, and sublime; and in spite of the ludicrous tones and gestures of the narrator, it produced more or less an impression upon the minds of her audience. From the cloud of her misty imagination various distinct images emerged. There was a large raven with a wedding ring in its mouth—there was a troubled sea, and a dove with a bleeding breast—there was a shroud, two coffins, and a grave, and there was the minister, Mr M'Dow, all dressed in white, standing in the kirk with Miss Edith, who was all dressed in black, and somebody else, with such a mist

upon them she could not make out who it was, &c. &c. &c.

A few days after this memorable dream, there arrived accounts of the death of Sir Angus Malcolm. He had died of the fever of the country, just as he was on the point of embarking for Britain. He had had sufficient warning of his danger, however, to admit of his making arrangements as to the management of his affairs, and the disposal of his son. Sir Angus seemed to have felt that Reginald had been left too long to Glenroy's superintendence, for he directed that he should, as soon as possible, be entered at one of the English universities, under the superintendence of Mr Ellis. After spending two years at college, he was to set out on a tour to the continent, accompanied by Mr Ellis, to remain abroad until he came of age. He was then to return home and celebrate the event among his own people, in a manner befitting the heir of an ancient house and noble property. A sanction was given to his marriage with Edith, and a hope expressed that he would then settle for life in his own country.

"O, what a mercy it is I had the good sense to tell my dream before this came to pass!" whispered Mrs Macauley to Benbowie; "for if I had not told it, nobody would have believed me now. Oh! what wonderful creatures we are! the great black raven! I cannot forget it! Little did I think that was Sir Angus, poor man! and the wedding ring that he had in his mouth too! was just to show like, that he was coming over to marry his son to Miss Edith."

"On my conscience, he was a very lucky man, to have cleared his estate before he died!" responded Benbowie.

Reginald showed much warmth of feeling on the occasion of his loss; but from the length of the separation that had taken place between the father and son, it was not to be expected that his sorrow should be lasting; and in due time he was comforted.

Glenroy had now arrived at the period of life when any change in the domestic arrangement is dreaded as the severest of evils, and the more so, as the gout had now become so frequent in its attacks, as to render him more than ever de-

pendent on domestic society. It may therefore be supposed Sir Angus's injunction did not accord with his inclinations, and he as usual vented his displeasure in apostrophising Benbowie.

"Finish his studies! finish his fiddlesticks! *I* never finished my studies—*I* never was at any of their English universities. I should be glad to know what my son could learn at an English university! Reginald may go if he chooses, but I'll be hanged if I'll allow Norman to accompany him. He shall not be tamed into insignificance if I can help it. It is a fine preparation for a Highland Chief to be cooped up in one of their musty colleges with a pack of priests and dominies, and sailing about their plainstones in a black gown and a trencher skull-cap!"

"Very true," responded Benbowie, "on my conscience, it's all very true—a philabeg would set him better."

"A fine thing, to be sure, for a Highland chief to have B.A. tacked to his name!"

"On my conscience, a man need not go so far to learn to cry BA!" said Benbowie.

"And then the scheme of sending him to the

continent is, if possible, still worse," continued Glenroy. "What can he learn there, but to dance and speak gibberish, or to be running after old bridges and broken statues, when he ought to be building new bridges, and entertaining the gentlemen of the county? Statues! a pack of rubbish. I would not let one of them within my door."

"On my conscience, I think you're quite right, Glenroy. I would not give a three-year-old stot for any stuccy babbies that ever were made."

Such was the style of colloquy held by these two worthy gentlemen; and had Reginald been inclined to disregard his father's dying injunctions, plausible pretexts would not have been wanting for him to have at least postponed the fulfilling of them. But Reginald was eager to enter upon the course pointed out to him, and Mr Ellis lost no time in taking the necessary steps for getting him entered at Oxford, whither he was to accompany him. Nothing could induce Glenroy to part with Norman; and as Norman attached no great ideas of pleasure to a

student's life, he was easily prevailed upon to relinquish it, and to remain at home his own master, so called, though still more the master of all around him.

Edith beheld with meek and silent sorrow the time approach for the departure of Reginald: to be separated from him for more than a few days was an evil she had never contemplated; and now weeks and months were to drag their slow course along, while Reginald and she were to dwell apart. Oh! what a solitude would hers be! the dreariest, the saddest of all solitudes, the solitude of the heart.

Reginald's sorrow at parting with Edith, it might be supposed, was pretty much swallowed up in the anticipated novelty and variety that awaited him; and he strove to comfort and reassure her, as he talked cheerfully of the shortness of the time of his probation. Three years were nothing; besides, he should certainly make a point of seeing her often again before he left England; and at any rate, he should write to her constantly, every day, that she might never for a single day forget him. He would then reite-

rate his own vows of eternal love and constancy, and call upon Edith to repeat the same, while each favourite haunt was visited and hallowed in their imaginations by the pensive thought, that it would be long ere they should again revisit them together. Thus the intervening days glided away with the rapidity of a stream, and thus feeling stamped the value of ages upon the duration of moments. Then swiftly came the parting hour!

——— "that hour,
When love first feels its own o'erwhelming power."

"This, Edith, is a ring of betrothment," said Reginald, as he placed one upon her finger. "Remember, there it must remain till I exchange it for a bridal one. Edith, do you promise?" and he held her hand locked in his, while Edith tried to smile an affirmative through her parting tears.

Again and again the farewell was spoken: again and again Edith was pressed to his heart, and now he was gone, and she was left alone.

CHAPTER XXXII.

By degrees the loss of Reginald's society was almost atoned for to Edith, by the new enjoyment of corresponding with him. It was a different, a more abstracted, and concentrated feeling, but scarcely a less delightful one than that which she used to enjoy in his presence. True, he was no longer with her; but then, what though the image itself was gone? The impression remained almost as vivid as the reality, and she had his ring, his picture, his letters: those mute, but eloquent pledges of his faith—the almost daily assurances of his love—the oft-repeated vows—the fond anticipations of their future happiness. Deep and earnest in her love, but timid and reserved in her manners, her heart expatiated more freely upon paper than

ever it had done in the daily intercourse of her whole life, so that she was ready to exclaim—

> " O, Fortune, ...
> . . . . thou canst not divide
> Our bodies so, but that our hearts are tied,
> And we can love by letters still, and gifts,
> And thoughts, and dreams."

Thus was her mind kept in a state of constant excitement, more inimical to its repose than the presence even of the object of her affection. Imagination left to itself had awakened in her that extreme sensibility so destructive to happiness, which, in seeming to give us " a sweet existence in another's being," is only fixing more firmly its barbed arrow in the heart.

So passed days, weeks, and months; and when the college vacations permitted, Reginald revisited with delight his early home. Absence, so far from abating the attachment of the youthful lovers, seemed if possible to have augmented it, and the lapse of time had only added new attractions to each, in the eyes of the other.

But now a longer period of absence was to intervene, and seas were to divide them. The

time for Reginald's visit to the continent had arrived, and painful was the parting of the lovers. Yet the sanguine spirit of Reginald imparted comfort to Edith, as he fondly reminded her that two out of the three years of their probation were over, and that this parting should be the last.

Many was the fond and impassioned letter she received from Reginald, and many were the tender and confiding ones she wrote in reply. At length his letters became less frequent, but that was not surprising, considering that he was constantly moving from one place to another; and then when they did come, they were as affectionate as ever. He still reminded Edith of their engagement—he still assured her that time and absence only rendered her dearer to him, and that he longed impatiently for the time when he was to return to her to part no more. But after receiving one of those letters, breathing all that a fond lover could say to the idol of his heart, a long pause ensued; and then, when the next came, Edith thought—but it must be fancy—that the style was changed. It was short, too; but he pleaded a headach—perhaps he was ill, and con-

cealed it from her, and many an anxious day and sleepless night she passed, till another arrived—it was still shorter, but he was just setting out upon an excursion, and had not time to write more than a mere line, to assure dear Edith he was well. Other long and dreary chasms ensued, and were but faintly attempted to be filled up by meagre letters, full of little else than apologies for their rarity, and promises of writing oftener and longer ones. But the same excuses continued—one time the heat was so excessive he could scarcely hold the pen—then he was interrupted by a friend, or he was just returned from a fatiguing excursion, or he was setting out upon a pleasure tour—or the time was now drawing near when he should be returning to Scotland, and therefore it was unnecessary to say much more at present.

So absorbed was Edith in anxiety about Reginald, that she was quite unconscious of the attentions, or rather intentions, of another lover, in the person of the young Lord Allonby, who, from partaking occasionally of Glenroy's hospitalities, had now become a more frequent visitor, and, having no small opinion of himself, he concluded he had only to pay his addresses to have them

instantly accepted. Edith's ideas of love were much too romantic to enable her to construe the flimsy gallantry of a modern fine gentleman into any thing like a serious passion, and her surprise at his lordship's hasty and self-assured proposals could only be surpassed by his amazement at the rejection of his suit. It was one that, in other circumstances, Glenroy would have been gratified with, but as Edith was engaged to Reginald, he could only have the satisfaction of chuckling over it in private, or throwing out innuendoes in public.

Thus wore away time; but still Reginald came not, and his birth-day, the day of his coming of age, which his father had recommended him to celebrate at home among his own people—that day which he himself had so fondly anticipated, and which Edith had looked forward to, with no common interest—that day passed unnoticed, unheeded on his part, and on hers only recorded as a day of disappointment and gloom.

Glenroy chafed and fumed at this disrespectful delay. Norman, still more sanguine and impatient in the self-assumed anticipations of his cousin's return, had scarcely been restrained more

than once from setting out to meet him. Mrs Macauley dreamed and wondered in vain. Neither dreams nor wondering could solve the mystery. Edith sighed and feared, she knew not what, for her heart was too simple and guileless to harbour suspicion. She had heard and read of such a thing as inconstancy, but to associate it with the idea of Reginald never entered her imagination, or if it did, it was instantly dismissed. She had only to recall the remembrance of past days—to look at his picture—to meet the gaze of those fond eyes—to read his letters fraught with vows of everlasting love—and all her doubts fled as by the touch of a talisman. Thus imagination still held sway over her, while time, as it moved slowly along,

> " Deposited upon the silent shore
> Of memory, images and precious thoughts,"

which it was the delight of her solitary hours to treasure up in the inmost recesses of her heart. She knew not—who in early life does know?—that such treasurings up of the frail records of human love, prove but as landmarks to note where the tide of passion and of sorrow hath been.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

YEARS had passed away since Ronald Malcolm had left his native home, when, one bright summer's day, a tall and sunburnt youth, coarsely and scantily clad, but with something wild and noble in his air and aspect, stood on the shores of Lochdhu, and for a moment surveyed its dark mountains and roaring waters, with the look of one to whom they bore no common interest.

That youth was Ronald, and many a sad sight his young eyes had looked upon, since last he left the spot where he now stood, and many "a strange and moving accident" burned within him, to relate to the dear ones he had left. He had to tell of the wonders of the raging sea and the angry heavens, which had shivered the stately ship, and sunk so many "high hearts and brave"

beneath the devouring billows. He had to tell of his own escape, with others of the gallant crew, and of the hunger, the thirst, the cold, the heat, the hardships, and privations they had endured, and under which many of those brave spirits had sunk. He had to tell of the survivors reaching the coast of Africa, only to become captives to the wild and lawless natives, by whom they were driven as slaves to the interior of those wild, desert, and unexplored regions, where his companions, one by one, fell victims to the severity of their lot. But his youth and dauntless spirit, his habits of endurance and activity, the flexibility and sweetness of his temper, had, under the blessing of a superintending Providence, enabled him to bear the heavy load assigned him, and had even gained him favour in the eyes of his barbarous captors. How many a summer's day and winter's night would it take, to tell of all that he had seen, and thought, and felt, and suffered, and done, during his dreary captivity! and how, even in the depths of his desolation, he had ever cherished that trust divine which a mother's lips had early breathed into his infant soul! Then came his

escape, with all its dangers and privations, his wanderings by land, his perils by sea—all these, and much more, had Ronald to tell—but all was forgotten in the tumult of his feelings as he stood once more on his native shore, and looked on his father's house, and recalled the dear familiar scenes of his childhood.

Memory flew over the intervening years, and all faded from his mind save the loved ones, whose looks and tones had sometimes haunted his very heart to agony, as fancy pictured the joys of home to the far-distant captive. And now in a few minutes he should behold them again; already he seemed to feel their kisses on his lip—their tears of gladness on his cheek—their arms enfolding him—once more he was pressed to a mother's beating heart! All these thoughts rushed through the young adventurer's mind, as he gazed for a moment on the well-remembered features of his mountain home. These were unchanged, for their stern and massive outline was unchangeable; but something of a still wilder, a more desolate and mournful cast, seemed to dwell upon them, for

all was silent and voiceless. Ronald stayed not to conjecture or to fear, but in an instant he was at the house—his father's house ! He had crossed the threshold of his once-happy home, but still there was none to meet him—none to welcome him. Every thing was displaced and in disorder, and he sought in several of the rooms before he discovered an old purblind woman, who seemed the sole inhabitant of the house he had left so full of life and joy, and youth and beauty.

In this ancient crone he recognized an old pensioner of his mother's, more famed for her fidelity and attachment to the family, than for the sweetness of her temper or the urbanity of her manners. In a voice choking with agitation, he enquired for Captain Malcolm, for the family; but he had to repeat the question three times before he could obtain an answer; for, though not positively deaf, her ear was slow to catch a strange accent, and Ronald's voice and accent were both so totally changed, that his own mother could scarcely have recognized

them. At length, in a sharp Highland tone, he received the satisfactory reply of,—

"Captain Malcolm?—aye! whar should he be but in his ain hooss?"

"But this was his house," said Ronald, reviving at this information, scanty as it was.

"Aye, and wha says it's no his hooss, noo? but it's no his dwelling-hooss, if you mean that; he's ower great a man to dwell here noo—aye, that he is!"

The truth now flashed upon Ronald, and, with a pang he said, "What!—he now lives at Inch Orran, I suppose?"

"To be sure—whar else should he live? But, sit down, sit down. You maun be a stranger here, it seems, frae the Low Country? Maybe, a friend o' the faamily?"

"Thank you; but first tell me, is Captain Malcolm well, and my ——, and all of them, are they all well?" And Ronald's lips quivered as he put the question.

"Oo, surely, surely—they're all well. What should ail them?"

"Nothing, nothing. And my——" Ro-

nald's heart fluttered as he thought of his mother; and he could not find voice to name the name dearest to his heart.

The old woman went on. "No, no, there's nothing ails them noo—they've gotten aw thing they can want. Och aye, God be praised! they are very prosperous noo, an' very happy."

"They have met with some good fortune, then, it seems?" said Ronald, trying to speak with composure.

"Och aye! 'deed an' they have done that, and well they deserve it. Not but what they paid for it, too, poor craaters! aye, that they did. God knows, their fine fortune cost them sore hearts at the time; but that's past—an' noo, what should they be but pleased an' happy?"

Ronald's heart heaved, and he was silent a few moments, then said, "But they have been afflicted—they have suffered?"

"Och! 'deed they were that—they were sore distrest, poor people! at the droonin o' their boy—a fine boy—a pretty boy he was—Och aye!" Here old Nanny groaned, and wiped her eyes with the corner of her apron.

"But you say they are happy now—they have forgotten him?" said Ronald, with emotion.

"Oh! surely, surely—God be thank't, he's forgotten noo, an' it's time—'deed is it—och aye! And we little know what's for our good in this world; for it was God's merciful providence, after all, that the boy was ta'en, or they tell me they would ha'e been but a puir needfu' faamily, the day—'deed would they!"

A strange pang shot through Ronald's heart. "What a vile unfeeling creature," thought he, "to talk in such a manner!" and he was about to leave the house, when old Nanny resumed,—

"Och aye! Providence was really kind in that particular, for the droonin' o' the boy, poor thing, (that ever I should say't!) has been the savin' o' that whole faamily, 'deed has it! And weel they deserve it, for they're a worthy well-doin' faamily; and Inch Orran himself is a good man, and does a deal o' good, that he does; and he is a reall blessin' to the country—that he is!"

"But he might have been a blessing to the country although his son had not been drowned," said Ronald.

" No, no—they tell me not. That if the boy had lived, he would have keepit his father a poor man a' his days; and wou'dna that have been a sin and a shame? No that it wad hae been the poor boy's fault, poor thing, but the fault o' them that would have made him keep his father's head below the water; Och! it was God's providence to tak the boy out of his worthy father's way; and noo a' thing's as it should be, and he has gotten his ain, honest man; and long, long, may he enjoy it!"

" And you say they are all quite well, - - and - - - happy?" said Ronald, his heart swelling, in spite of the contempt he tried to feel for the unfeeling narrator.

" Aye, aye! they are that. Happy they are, and happy may they be; and shouldna they be happy when there's gawn to be a grand marriage amang them? Miss Lucy, that's her that's the eldest o' the faamily, isna she gawn to get a husband, and a braw one, too—no less than the young Laird of Dunross? No but what Miss Lucy is well worthy of him and the best in the land—aye, by my troth she is; but she wadna

hae gotten him wantin' the tocher; for the auld Laird's ower fond o' the siller to let his son tak a tocherless lass. Och aye, shame till him!—Wasna poor Miss Lucy maist broken-hearted because he wouldna let his son get her when she was the poor man's daughter? And the Captain wouldna let him take her wantin' his father's will; and the poor young craatures were just beside themselves, like; and so the young man went into the army, and has been in the Indies, but noo he's come back; and they're so happy, and the Captain—that's Inch Orran—is to give her five thousand gold guineas on her weddin'-day, they tell me, forbye this hooss that they're comin' to dwell in; and him paintin' it all from top to bottom, and makin' every thing so genteel for them; and all comes o' the droonin' o' the bonny laddie! Och aye!"

Many little circumstances that had taken place before he left home, here darted into Ronald's mind, in confirmation of old Nanny's words. Young Dunross and Lucy had been lovers even then, and want of fortune on her part had been the only obstacle to their union; and now that

was removed, and he had returned only to blast their happiness!

"But what if he has not been drowned—what if he should yet return?" said he, with agitation.

"Och, sorrow bit he'll ever return noo, poor bairn; and it would na do for him to come back in the body noo—'deed, an' he wad be but a black sight—no, no, that it would not—he's been owre lang dead to come back noo—'deed has he, och aye! he's dead and gone, an' it would na do to bring him back again—no, no; wae I was when I heard o' the poor thing's droonin', but I was ignorant then. I did not know that it was God's providence to set up the faamily like by that same means, and make them all so comfortable, and genteel, and happy, och aye!"

"And my mother?" said Ronald, faintly, as he covered his eyes with his hand, while his whole frame thrilled with emotion.

"The mother?" said Nanny, catching the sound imperfectly. "Aye, his mother—that's the leddy hersell, you'll mean? och, God only

knows the mother's sorrow, och aye! But she's a quiet craater, and she knew whose hand it was that was upon her, aye, that she did, and so she demeaned hersell like a good Christian as she is; but they tell me she has never had her ain colour since."

Tears forced their way through Ronald's fingers; he started up, and was hurrying away, when Nanny interposed, rather unwilling to part so soon with a visitor from whom she had as yet extracted no information in return, and visitors to Nanny were few and far between.

"And what's taking you away, my lad, in such a hurry? canna you sit doon a wee and rest you, and tak a drap this warm day?"

"The day is far spent, and I have a long walk before me," said Ronald.

"Aye? maybe ye'll be going to Inch Orran? I'm thinking you'll be a friend o' our young laird's? that's Mr Angus—for I guess by your tongue you're a gentle."

"Is he at home?" asked Ronald, waving the question and the compliment.

"I'm thinkin' so that he's at home the noo;

but he goes away for months and months at a time to one o' their places in the low country, where young gentlemen go to learn every thing —they're no schools—they're universals—or something like that; you'll ken what I mean; for he's very bookish, and they tell me he will be a great man yet, since his father can give him such a grand education; but he's no such a fine, roving, spirity craater as the 'tother poor boy was—what a craater that was! Nothing feared him, and he was so good-natured and so kind to every body, och aye! he would 'have run a mile to flit a sow,' as they say. But, no doubt, he has got his reward noo, though we cannot see it; for if he can but see what a great blessin' his death has been to his faamily, I'm sure he'll no begrudge it, wherever he be."

"Surely his family would be happier to have him back again?" said Ronald, after a pause.

"Troth then, and to tell the truth, I'm no sure o' that—no but what they were very fond of him, and thought much of him when they had him; but now you know, like good Christians, their minds are made up to want him, and maybe

they could na want other things so well—och no. No, it would never do for him to come back in the body, for they tell me if he was to come alive again, the money would be all ta'en from Inch Orran; and would not that be very hard noo, when he's doing so much good with it? forbye keepin' such a genteel hooss, is na he ga'en to build a grand new one, and does na the leddy ride in her own coach noo, and is na he settin' out his childer so well in the world, and himself upon a footin' wi' the best in the land? aye, and the good that he's doin' is no to be told. No but what he's ower keen o' what they ca' improvements.—Och, sorrow tak some o' thae improvements! They'll no leave a bunch o' heather in the country; but nae doot, he's doin' good, for aw that. Och! hunders and hunders are blessin' the day that made Inch Orran a rich man—'deed are they—but for that, mony's the poor craater that would hae been trailin' owre the saut sea wi' their wives and their childer, awa frae aw their kith and kin, and toilin' their hearts out in a far-off land, if it had not pleased God to give Inch Orran the hand and the heart to help

them—och aye, he's the one that will never drive the poor man off his land, as long as the water rins and the heather grows—och, he's a blessed man, and blessed he will be, and the poor lad's death was a great blessing—och aye, 'deed was't."

Ronald's heart was brimming high; he abruptly wished old Nanny good day, and quitted the house.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE young wanderer proceeded on his way, but his mind was a chaos of contending emotions, for there are hearts of so generous a nature, as to be more keenly alive to the sufferings of others than to their own.

"This then is my welcome!" said he to himself, in bitterness of spirit; "already forgotten, or rather remembered only as a riddance; and my return, it seems, instead of bringing joy, will only be felt as a misfortune—my very death to be the cause of rejoicing to hundreds!—and *they—they* to be all so happy, while I——" Tears burst from his eyes as he thought how his heart had pined for the dear ones he had left—"And my mother! my mother! can she too have forgotten me?"

And on the bare supposition, he threw himself on the ground in an agony of grief, mortification, and disappointment, while a thousand wild thoughts rushed through his mind.

"And am I so selfish then as to wish to cause sorrow to those I love? and can I not bear to see them happy at my expense? But I will see them, I will satisfy myself that they *are* happy, and then—they shall remain so—were it at the price of my heart's blood!"

Starting up, he pursued his course towards Inch Orran. As he came within the extensive bounds which he knew pertained to it, he every where read a confirmation of old Nanny's words, in the improvements he beheld. The glens were more thickly peopled, and with more comfortable-looking dwellings; mountains, which had once frowned in heather, were now smiling in verdure; dreary moors were now covered with young plantations; a neat church and school-house stood where a wilderness had formerly spread; all denoted that the stream of wealth was indeed flowing in the channel of beneficence, and every where spreading its riches

over the land. He entered several of the cottages, and all told the same tale—a happy and thriving peasantry had been redeemed from poverty and exile, and even while his own home was fondly remembered, and his sad fate lamented, still his death was regarded as a blessing.

"And all this I am come only to blast," thought Ronald, as he surveyed the goodly scene that stretched around him. "I come only to bring poverty, and sorrow, and exile, to all these poor people, and to my own home!—Oh! that is worst of all, even there I can bring no joy!—But happen what will, they shall not have cause to mourn that I still live—if they are happy, if they are indeed happy, to them I will still be dead——" And, dashing the tears from his eyes, he hastened on his way.

Years had passed away, and with them the bitterness, though not the remembrance, of sorrow; for Ronald's name was still pronounced with emotion in his family circle, and the blank he had left still remained a dreary chasm to the eye and the ear, accustomed to the animation of his presence, to his generous affections, to his

kindly accents, to his bright smiles, to his "sweet laughter, and wild song, and footstep free," and to all the charms and the treasures of his opening mind. But there is no anguish, however severe, that time, and religion, and reflection will not gradually soften into a resignation so entire, as to the casual observer to appear almost like forgetfulness. And times there are—else who could bear the constant woe and live?—when even the mother forgets the child over whose grave she has shed so many a bitter tear, and whose image, though shrouded from the common eye, still lies buried in the depths of her own heart.

It was evening when Ronald reached Inch Orran, and the setting sun was shedding its last glories on the scene. His heart was keenly alive to outward impressions, and dull must the soul have been that could have gazed unmoved on such a spectacle. But how doubly sweet to him, who had been the shipwrecked sea-boy, the captive in a far distant land, the slave beneath a burning sky, the wayworn houseless wanderer,—to stand upon his native land, and look on such an earth, and

such a heaven! The sun seemed as if melting away beneath its own bright effulgence. The mountains gleamed with ever-changing hues of gold, and crimson, and purple; each tufted isle, and rock, and tree, shone in the "rich sadness" of eve's last splendour. Not a breath ruffled the surface of the water; not a sound broke the stillness of the air, save the distant bleating of the sheep, and the soft rippling of the waves as they crept gently along the shore, or broke with faint effort upon the bare fantastic roots of some stately beech, whose stem rose like a mast of gold from the bosom of the waters. But not all the pomp and glory of the scene could arrest the gaze of him whose eyes were fixed on the walls that contained the treasures of his heart, the first, the only objects of his young affections! He hastily drew near, then stopped, as if to restrain himself from rushing at once into their sight, and casting himself into their arms. And then the one cruel thought came like ice upon his heart, to chill the warm gush of nature.

"I come to bring them all to poverty! Oh, if they have ceased to think of me—if I am for-

gotten—if my place is filled—would that I had died rather than that I should live to see them rue the day of my return! But they shall not. I will dig, toil, starve, but they shall be happy!"

He now stood amidst the ruins of Inch Orran, but the hand of taste had been there since he had visited them. A still greater portion of the old walls had fallen; but the rubbish had been removed, and the large openings gave light, and air, and cheerfulness to the dwelling-house, which was half hid by the jessamines and honeysuckles and roses that clustered around its windows. Ronald, with throbbing heart, leant against a part of the ancient tower, where once had been a window, but which was now merely an opening curtained with ivy. His heart beat as though it would have burst from his bosom. At one moment he had yielded to the passionate impulse to make himself known; but, long inured to habits of self-command, by a mighty effort he subdued the yearnings of nature, and repressed the feelings which strove for mastery. "I will wait—I will wait," he said to himself, while every fibre quivered to agony, and he

gnawed his lip as if to enforce its silence. Opposite to where he stood was the family sitting-room, and from the spot he could plainly discern all that was passing within. But it was some time ere he could dispel the gathering mists from his eyes, so as to enable him to single out each dear one numbered in his heart. Ah!

> "There are no looks like those which dwell
> On long remember'd things!"

His eye was first attracted to his father, who sat nearest to him reading, but his back was towards him, and he could only perceive that his figure was thinner, and his hair greyer, than when he had parted from him. At one end of the room Lucy was seated at a piano, but it seemed as if merely an excuse for the lovers to be a little apart, for young Dunross leant on the back of her chair, and her sweet face was turned to him in conversation, while now and then she carelessly touched a few notes of the instrument. A tea-table was in the middle of the room, at which a lovely girl, whom Ronald recognized as his sister Flora, was presiding with the younger

part of the family, who were gaily chatting and laughing together.

Over all these, Ronald's eyes wandered in search of his mother, till they riveted themselves upon that cherished image. She sat apart at a window which looked out upon the lake and the setting sun; her pale brow and still lovely profile pencilled against the deep flush of the evening sky. Her air betokened "the careless stillness of a thinking mind." One hand hung listlessly on the shoulder of a little boy, her youngest born, the image of her long-lost Ronald, who, with head of curling gold, stood by her side, feeding with bits of bread Ronald's fondly-cherished dog.

O how pensive was the look with which she gazed on the still water, and the silent beauty of the skies! It might be that her thoughts were then of sad but holy import; that they were of him who had found a grave in the deep sea, a home in the mansions of those glorious heavens: of him whose place at hearth and board still to the mother's eye stood vacant. Scarcely could Ronald restrain himself as his heart heaved

almost to agony, and the large tear drops gushed from his eyes, and he thought what rapture it would be to fall on his mother's neck and weep!

"No—oh no! she has not forgotten me; I am sure she has not. Even now, perhaps she is thinking of me!" and in a second he would have been in her arms. But at that moment his mother turned towards her little boy: a bright sweet smile lighted up her face at something he had said, and she looked and spoke fondly to him, as she parted the fair curls from his sunny brow.

Presently the young party of tea-drinkers started up, and flew towards her as if with some petition. They spoke with eager childish gesticulation. They hung upon her with looks of loving entreaty, and one little fair girl, climbing upon the back of her chair, laughingly threw her arms round her neck, and kissed her. Lucy, recalled from her aberrations, struck up a lively air; the tea-table was pushed aside, and all were in motion for a dance.

"Yes, yes, they *are* happy, and I am forgotten!" exclaimed Ronald, in a burst of pas-

sionate emotion, as he rushed from his hiding place, and fled far from Inch Orran, and all he loved.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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